THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Mrs Frank Amos
703 Algoma St.
City

THE

WITHERED HEART.

BY

T. S. ARTHUR,

AUTHOR OF "THE THREE ERAS IN A WOMAN'S LIFE," "THE TRIALS AND CONFESSIONS OF A HOUSEKEEPER," "THE HAND WITHOUT THE HEART," "WHAT CAN WOMAN DO?" ETC., ETC., ETC.

"Hearts are daily broke, and spirits crush'd,
While he who slays destroys in safety."
DOUGLAS JERROLD.

PHILADELPHIA:
JOHN E. POTTER AND COMPANY,
617 SANSOM STREET.

PS
1039
A78wi

PREFACE.

MANY are the withered hearts that lie dormant in the otherwise animated bosoms that grace the firesides of this world! These are the *skeletons* in homes which wreck and destroy the peace and tranquility of mind of thousands, and consign them to the enjoyment of miserable and wretched lives. Domestic unhappiness, too frequently, is the source of this blight upon the heart and its affections.

To be truly loved is the great reward life has to offer. Where there is nothing so sweet as to be loved, except loving, and where exists true, pure love, which is not a thing of the senses, but of the soul—love that is the outgrowth of goodness—what should not one do to win and keep such tenderness? What should one not risk, or dare, or forsake for it? But too often, alas! selfishness steps in and demands a sacrifice too great. The reaction from the realization of a crushed love seldom takes place, and the heart withers and dies, the unhappy cause of the sacrifice only awakening to a full reali-

1117374

zation of his or her misfortune when probably it is too late.

John Hardy, the husband in our story, only came to realize this fact, in all its force, when his wife was passing away to an immortal life, and it is faithfully demonstrated how, but for the display of his self-will, the glamour of a warm and cheering heart might have been his through life.

The life-histories and heart-experiences of our characters have their counterparts in many other homes; and we trust that their publication may exert a benign and healthy influence upon all such as may be similarly affected, through the spirit of pride and self-will; and a happy love and domestic felicity may find that perfect reinstatement in their social relations ere the bitter blight, a withered heart, shall overtake them.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION 1

CHAPTER II.

OVERTURES OF FRIENDSHIP 15

CHAPTER III.

JANE ENFIELD'S EARLY LIFE. 30

CHAPTER IV.

PRESENTIMENTS 49

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST CONTEST 61

CHAPTER VI.

A VISIT TO GARDEN STREET 75

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW HOME 91

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOUDS AND SUN-GLEAMS 102

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

EVENING HOURS 116

CHAPTER X.

THE NON-ARRIVAL 128

CHAPTER XI.

ABSENT AGAIN 146

CHAPTER XII.

END OF THE HONEYMOON 156

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST-BORN 167

CHAPTER XIV.

HELEN'S EARLY EDUCATION 182

CHAPTER XV.

HELEN SENT TO SCHOOL . . . . . 19[illegible]

CHAPTER XVI.

HELEN RETURNS HOME. . . . . 20[illegible]

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ASYLUM 221

CHAPTER XVIII.

BAFFLED PURPOSES 234

CHAPTER XIX.

BRIGHTER HOPES 244

CHAPTER XX.

BETTER DAYS 257

CHAPTER XXI.

PAGE
THE SEPARATION 266

CHAPTER XXII.

EDWARD LINTON 279

CHAPTER XXIII.

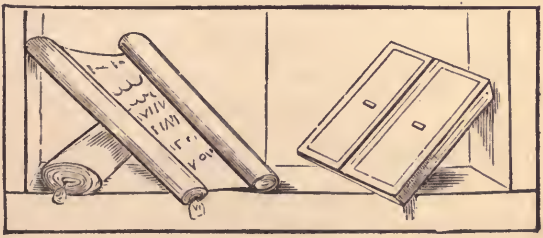
THE ERROR DETECTED 288

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE INVALID 296

CHAPTER XXV.

THE TOURISTS' RETURN 309



"The heart that is soonest awake to the flowers
Is always the first to be touched by the thorns."

MOORE.

THE WITHERED HEART.

CHAPTER I.

Difference of Opinion.

"Sometimes at a glance thou judgest well; years could add little to thy knowledge;
When charity gloweth on the cheek, or malice is lowering in the eye,
When honesty's open brow, or the weasel-face of cunning is before thee.
* * * * * * * *
But often by shrewd scrutiny thou judgest to the good man's harm;
For it may be his hour of trial, or he slumbereth at his post."

TUPPER.

"My ideal of a man," said Mrs. Clement, glancing as she spoke towards a gentleman who was just entering the room with a lady upon his arm. He was still in the full vigour of life—had dark, earnest eyes, a broad forehead, and a calm, mild countenance. His lips, which were rather full, betokened firmness of character.

"Mr. Hardy!" The lady to whom the remark was made, simply uttered the name of the individual referred to.

"Yes; John Hardy. In him you see my ideal of what a man should be."

"I never thought there was anything very remarkable about him," was answered. "He is not particularly handsome."

"I think him handsome, Mrs. Percival."

"It is well, I suppose, that we do not all see alike," replied the lady, smiling. "Mrs. Hardy is, no doubt, of your opinion."

"I am not so sure of that, Mrs. Percival. The fact is, I half suspect that she doesn't appreciate her husband as she should do."

"She has, one would think, the best opportunity for forming a just estimate of his character."

"Very true; but it sometimes happens, that individuals are blind to the good qualities of those with whom they are in daily intercourse."

"It is in the daily life that good qualities manifest themselves, if they have any existence," said Mrs. Percival.

"True again. But these good qualities in others may not always be such as are most agreeable."

"I don't see how good qualities can be anything but agreeable," observed Mrs. Percival.

"Justice is a good quality," replied Mrs. Clement, "but not always agreeable to the criminal."

"Oh! I understand you;—Mrs. Hardy has her peculiarities."

"All of us have them," was the vague reply. After a brief pause in the conversation Mrs Clement said—

"He is one of the most agreeable men that I meet anywhere in society."

"He is more than agreeable," replied Mrs. Percival. "He instructs and elevates by his conversation. As to his being good company, I can agree with you entirely. But, of the real man, existing behind that, I have no knowledge, and cannot speak in any positive way. The exterior seeming and the interior life have too often very little that is in just correspondence. Mr. Hardy is very highly spoken of. My husband often refers to him as an individual of the firmest integrity. 'His word is as good as his bond,' I have heard him say many times. And yet, Mrs. Clement, there is something about the man that gives me an unpleasant impression. Do you know, I have sometimes had the idea that he was selfish and cold-hearted."

"Why, Mrs. Percival! You astonish me! Cold-hearted!"

"Even so. But I must be more guarded in my words. It is not right to speak to another's detriment from mere vague impressions. No doubt he is a great deal better than I am."

While this conversation was going on, Mr. Hardy, the person referred to, had passed to the opposite end of the room from that where Mrs. Clement and Mrs. Percival were seated. Here he became the centre of an interested circle both of

ladies and gentlemen. Mrs. Hardy had withdrawn her hand from the arm of her husband—or, to speak more correctly, Mr. Hardy had permitted his arm to fall in a way that indicated his wish, that she should relinquish her hold upon him, which was done instantly. A friend joined her at the moment, and in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, the two ladies seated themselves in a retired part of the room. They were intimate and congenial; and took more interest in the things pertaining to their inner lives, than in the external social life around them.

Mrs. Hardy was a pale, thoughtful-looking woman; with an expression of face rather tending to repel than to attract strangers. When in repose, there was a look of disappointment on her countenance, which at times became almost painful. She had once been handsome, and many traces of former beauty still lingered about lips, and cheek, and brow. Her dark dreamy eyes had once been full of dancing light. Now they seldom flashed; and when they did, the fire that burned in them with a momentary blaze startled the surprised beholder. Those who remembered her as she was some twenty years earlier, and contrasted her appearance then with the aspect now presented, felt that some unseen causes were at work, sapping the foundations of her happiness. So far as outward things were concerned, she had

the world's estimation all that the heart could desire. The home in which she dwelt, and in which were no vacant places, those sad remembrancers of the loved and lost, was elegant even to luxuriousness. Whatever money could purchase, to the fullest extent of her wishes, was within her reach. And yet, for years, there had been a steady dimming of her eyes—a steady fading of her cheek—a steady paling of the light of life. Her voice once so full of gushing joy, had long since lost its buoyant tones, and now rarely lifted itself above a low, murmured utterance of words, that seemed rather echoes of feeling than records of thought.

"Not my ideal of a woman, certainly," remarked Mrs. Clement, referring to Mrs. Hardy, who had seated herself not far distant from the place where the former was conversing with her friend. "To me, there is something very repellent about her."

"I have heard her spoken of," said Mrs. Percival, in answer to this, "as being, in former times, one of the most attractive of women—full of life and animation."

"I remember her as a very different person from what she now appears," replied Mrs. Clement, "though I did not know her intimately, nor had I the pleasure of meeting her often."

"The change, now so marked, began (as I am told) soon after her marriage to Mr. Hardy. In the space of two or three years, she looked con-

siderably older. It has been whispered that her husband is not, in the retirement of home, all that he appears abroad."

"A gossip's tale! Mere idle talk!" said Mrs. Clement, with some warmth of manner. "I know a lady who resided in the family for several months, and she says, that a kinder man at home than Mr. Hardy she has never met. She represents him as domestic, orderly, and thoughtful of every one's comfort."

"What is her report touching the lady?" inquired Mrs. Percival.

"Not so satisfactory."

"Did she specify anything?"

"No. The most that I could gather from her was, that Mrs. Hardy was queer."

"That means a great deal, or nothing."

"Yes. In the present case it means something undoubtedly. Deliver me from a 'queer' woman! A man who can get along with one must be a saint. Mr. Hardy, she said, was always mild, always even-tempered, always the same. As you saw him on the day you entered his house, so you saw him on the day of your departure, whether you remained a week or a month."

"Strong testimony in his favour!"

"It is. As for Mrs. Hardy, it is my opinion that she's a selfish, dissatisfied woman at heart, and that all her unhappiness flows from internal causes."

"That may be. Yet in the absence of facts, it is best not to suffer our minds to come to any positive conclusions in regard to others. Some great sorrow, I fear, is at her heart, and as a human sufferer, she is entitled to human sympathy. Mine she has. A woman's heart is not always understood, Mrs. Clement; and of all the readers of women's hearts, men have the least discernment. Indeed, it is one of my theories that women have emotions, wants, and yearnings, the nature of which men cannot comprehend. And I believe that all around us are women whose very life is dying out daily, because the men, whom they call their husbands, are, in their selfishness and sensual ignorance, trampling under foot what to them is sacred and holy."

"Doubtless, many women of refined sentiments, who are married to coarse brutes, suffer as you intimate," replied Mrs. Clement. "But, in the present case, there is quite as much refinement, and as high a feeling of virtue and honour on the part of the husband, as on that of the wife. Nay, if I do not greatly err, the superiority is on his side."

Mr. Hardy, who had been moving about the room, exchanging a few words with a friend here, or a group of ladies there, now advanced to where Mrs. Clement and Mrs. Percival sat conversing, and taking a chair, he said in his peculiarly pleasant way—

"Ah, Mrs. Clement! I am glad to meet your cheerful face this evening. How is your good husband? Is he here to-night?"

"Oh, yes; there he stands." And the lady nodded across the room.

"Good evening, Mrs. Percival!" Not quite so cordially was this said; nor were the smile and word of response to the greeting as hearty as those given by Mrs. Clement. "It is some time since I had the pleasure of seeing you, Mrs. Percival. Have you been secluding yourself?"

"Home-duties first, you know, Mr. Hardy. These have large claims upon our time and attention."

"True—very true; and I honour the woman who, from principle, makes home-duties the most sacred obligations of her life;"—Mr. Hardy spoke with earnestness and animation;—"for home is the centre of all good influences. As the homes of the people are, so will the people be. How largely is the world indebted to good wives and mothers!"

"You regard them as the world's regenerators?" said Mrs. Percival.

"If it is ever regenerated," was answered, "with them will rest the honour. A woman's influence, indeed, is all-powerful. It is like heat, steadily going forth, all-pervading, all-subduing. Wherever it penetrates, it changes

the order of things. Nothing can long resist its subtle power. The very barriers we lift against it soon yield to its warmth; and we feel its potency in our hearts, while yet dreaming that the outermost gate of entrance is double-barred."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Percival, with a sigh. "If this influence were always for good! But heat destroys, as well as revivifies. The fires that burn in the human heart are not all holy."

"Alas, that it is so!" replied Mr. Hardy. "And, alas! that women, in general, have not a higher sense of their great responsibility!"

Mr. Hardy's eyes wandered across the room as he spoke, and rested—so both ladies thought—upon his wife, who sat conversing with the friend she had joined on first entering the room. They looked into each other's faces with glances of covert meaning.

"All duties are not alike," said Mrs. Percival.

"True!" Mr. Hardy spoke as if his attention had become busied with some other theme.

"Nor are we always the best judges of one another's social obligations," added Mrs. Percival. "I have sometimes thought"—and she looked steadily at Mr. Hardy, uttering her words with emphasis—"that we take a higher pleasure in defining the duties of others, than in discharging our own."

The sentiment found an echo in Mr. Hardy's mind, and he responded with animation—

"Truly spoken, madam! Truly spoken. I have often given utterance to the same idea."

"And are we not in great danger of error in this defining of others' 'duties?'" added the lady.

"Perhaps we are." There was a falling cadence in the speaker's tones.

"I have also thought," resumed Mrs. Percival, "that we help others to do their life-duties more truly when we perform our own, than when we indicate to them, in words no matter how fitting, the paths in which their feet should tread. It is better to walk in the right way, than merely to act as guide-posts,—better for others, I mean."

"We may show another the way in which he should walk," said Mr. Hardy, "and yet not walk in the same way ourselves. No two life-paths are exactly in the same line."

"True,—but our walk is more inspiring than our words, Mr. Hardy. Fine sentiments are admirable in their way; but an act has more power than a hundred words. If we would all *do* what behoves us in our respective spheres, we might be saved the utterance of many fine precepts that die on the air."

"You are a close moralist, Mrs. Percival, and not one at all inclined to flatter weak human nature."

"Self-flattery is an easy and natural thing," said the lady, "but self-compulsion is a harder

matter. Your self-compelling, self-denying people, have of all men the widest charity for the shortcomings of others. A talking moralist is not usually a living one;—at least, so my observation inclines me to believe."

Mr. Hardy did not seem disposed to make any reply. He stood a few moments, in a musing attitude, and then passed to another part of the room, and joined another group of ladies.

"Did you mean to be personal?" said Mrs. Clement.

"Perhaps I did. At least I was using a probe, as the doctors say."

"You may probe there to your heart's content, Mrs. Percival, but you'll find no unsound place in *his* heart!"

"You think him an angel!"

"Oh no! not an angel; but a very perfect human being."

"There is no human being so perfect that his heart is entirely free from evil. The best man that lives is impure in the sight of God."

"True, of course, in a general way."

"Yes; and sadly true in a particular way. Mr. John Hardy is no exception."

"You are prejudiced."

"Perhaps I am;—we are all of us given to prejudices, more or less. But that man's *tout-ensemble* is, and always has been, disagreeable to

me; and when this is the case, I never feel any confidence. A man may hide his purposes and thoughts; but there is a moral instinct that will discern something of his real character through all his disguises."

"Hardly a fair mode of judging!" said Mrs. Clement.

"A woman's perceptions, I take it, are rarely at fault. The evil is, that she is not enough guided by them."

"Reason and common sense are safer guides, Mrs. Percival."

"No doubt of it, in all cases where reason and common sense can be called into play. But qualities of mind are not discernible by thought, nor appreciable by what we call common sense. Justice can take note of a man only from his actions. But it is a sad truth, Mrs. Clement, that there are hypocrites in the world. The exterior, instead of being a mirror to reflect the soul, is too often a veil to hide its real form. And so, after all, in our estimate of men's real character, we are driven to depend largely on the impression they make upon us.

"The eye rarely deceives us," said Mrs. Clement.

"Perhaps not. But what a mystery there is in every eye · and how difficult it is to gaze, except for a few moments at a time, into the eye of another!"

"I have always found it so."

"A steady eye is regarded as indicative of courage; also of conscious integrity. In a general way, this may be true. But it will not always hold good, and should not be set down as an infallible rule. I would pardon any one, however, for refusing to trust a man whose eye for ever wandered from his."

"Mr. Hardy has a clear, steady eye," said Mrs. Clement.

"I should say not," remarked Mrs. Percival; "for I found it almost impossible to fix it just now."

"The subject of conversation may have had something to do with that. I think a portion of what you said, was not likely to be altogether agreeable to him.'

"Why not? Did I utter any sentiment to which a true man might not heartily respond?"

"Things, perfectly true in themselves, may be said in a way that is disagreeable. The bare suspicion that truths, expressed as generalities, are meant for specific application, cannot fail to produce something akin to embarrassment. And herein, I presume, lies the secret of Mr. Hardy's unsteady eye when it encountered yours. So, in this case, I should not think the eye-judgment is to be depended upon."

"I am willing to give Mr. Hardy the full

benefit of your interpretations," said Mrs. Percival, smiling. "No doubt he has his own notion as to what 'stuff' I am 'made of;' and no doubt there was in us a mutual sense of repulsion. My own impression is, that his opinion of me is just as flattering as mine is of him. And it is quite possible that he is a great deal better as a man, than I am as a woman. But let us change the conversation to a more agreeable theme."

CHAPTER II.

Overtures of Friendship.

"There lies no desert in the land of life;
For e'en that tract that barrenest doth seem,
Labour'd of thee in faith and hope, shall teem
With heavenly harvests and rich gatherings rife.
Haply no more Music, and Mirth, and Love,
And glorious things of old and younger art,
Shall of thy days make one perpetual feast;
But when these bright companions all depart,
Lay there thy head upon the ample breast
Of Hope—and thou shalt hear the angels sing above."

F. A. Kemble.

It was, perhaps, a full half hour from the time when Mr. and Mrs. Hardy entered the room, that Mrs. Percival found herself beside the latter. They had met in society occasionally, but they were not intimately acquainted; and all their intercourse up to this time had been marked with a degree of formality. The conversation held with Mrs. Clement had created something of a curious interest in Mrs. Hardy's behalf; and now that the latter was near her, Mrs. Percival felt a desire to know her better.

"A little apart as usual," she said, smiling, and with a certain repressed familiarity of manner

that took away the appearance of obtrusiveness, "It has always seemed to me, Mrs. Hardy, that you looked down upon the world as we sometimes look upon the crowd from a casement—conscious of its disturbance, yet unaffected by it."

"That is impossible," was the low-spoken answer. "So long as we are in the world, we are mixed up with it, and must feel whatever disturbs its harmony. I am no exception, Mrs. Percival."

"And there is always something to disturb—always some discordant jar along the wires. How sadly is everything out of tune!"

"Do you think so?" Mrs. Hardy lifted her dark, sunken, penetrating eyes to the face of her companion. "I have thought the world full of harmonies."

"You?" There was surprise in Mrs. Percival's voice.

"Why should it not be so? Has not God made it? It is full of beauty to the eyes—and must be full of harmonies for the heart rightly attuned to perceive them. But, ah! how few hearts there are in tune. It is here that the defect lies. If the strings of an instrument are not in accord, the softest touch will jar us painfully. The world, Mrs. Percival, teems with beauty; there are sweet melodies breathing along its valleys, and echoing from every mountain. But, with too many of

us, the eyes are veiled and the ears dull of hearing."

"If we could but lift the veil, and unstop the ears!" said Mrs. Percival.

"Ah! If! if! Between what heights of enjoyment and depths of misery stands this little word, as an impassable barrier! If!—How many hearts have been broken on this rock!—how many joy-freighted barks wrecked for ever!"

"Happy it is for us that there is a beyond," said Mrs. Percival, a beautiful smile lighting up her face suddenly, as we sometimes see the summer lightning leap from the heart of a sunset cloud, covering it with radiance.

Mrs. Hardy sighed, and her eyes drooped to the floor, the long dark lashes resting like a silken fringe above her white transparent cheeks.

"*You* have hope in the beyond?" The voice of Mrs. Hardy trembled slightly, as she uttered these words. She had once again lifted her eyes, in which a singular light was burning.

"What were life here, without this hope! How can you ask the question?"

"Forgive me if my words have been unadvised or distasteful," said Mrs. Hardy. "You know not how earnestly—yea, eagerly—I have looked into and questioned the 'beyond.' But no land has yet become visible to my straining eyes—no answer has been returned to my expectant heart."

"We have the great, soul-cheering promise of life—life everlasting."

Mrs. Hardy shook her head, while a shade of disappointment fell over her countenance.

"What more do we want?" queried Mrs. Percival.

"Everything!" ejaculated Mrs. Hardy, with an emphasis that startled her auditor. "Everything! Life everlasting? What an awful thought to one into whose every moment of life are crowded years of anguish!"

"You pain me by your words," said Mrs. Percival, in a voice of pity. "I meant not to awaken a pang in your bosom."

A feeble smile lighted the wan features of Mrs. Hardy, as she answered—

"I have but supposed a case."

"A very rare one, I am sure. Few such exist; for life, in its worst aspects, has many compensations."

"Have you nothing in regard to this 'beyond' more definite for the heart to rest upon?" inquired Mrs. Hardy, speaking in a calmer voice. "These vague generalities bring no comfort to my spirit."

"Can you not trust in the promises of Him whose word is truth? 'In my Father's house,' He says, 'are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you' But I need not repeat the glad

assurance of future life and happiness to the righteous, which burn like stars in the firmament on every page of Holy Writ."

"I know them by heart," said Mrs. Hardy, in a quiet tone.

"And they have lighted your path many and many a time, when but for them your feet would have stumbled."

"It may be so. I will not gainsay it. But they are only stars, after all; merely penetrating the night. It is the day-dawn for which I am seeking. But not a single gleam yet gilds the mountain-tops. The cry of my soul is—'Watchman, what of the night?' And I have yet to hear that joyful answer—'The morning breaketh!' But, forgive me, my dear Madam! your words have betrayed me into unwonted revelations. Let my heart flutter back to its own dim chamber and fold again its drowsy wings."

"I have seen just enough to interest me deeply and to draw me strongly towards you, Mrs. Hardy You seem to be walking in darkness, while there is light around you. It may be in my power to open a window upwards, and let the broad, bright sunbeams shower down upon you. Oh! how gladly would I do this. For all suffering sister-hearts, I have deep sympathies. Will you, sister in suffering, let me draw near to you in spirit?"

Mrs. Hardy reached out her hand with a kind

of eager instinct, and grasped that of Mrs. Percival. The movement was quiet and unobtrusive, and gave not a ripple to the surface of things around them.

"Let us seek a place less in the eye of observation," said Mrs. Percival. And the two ladies passed from the crowded rooms into the beautiful garden attached to the mansion in which they were evening-guests.

"The peace of nature!" said Mrs. Percival, glancing up to the illumined firmament, where the stars shone in tranquil beauty. "Nature is all in harmony, and her words to the troubled spirit are, 'Peace—be still!'"

Her companion did not answer, though her eyes looked upwards.

"Have you not often heard this voice deep in your heart?" said Mrs. Percival.

"Not for many years," was replied mournfully. "It is a long time since nature has spoken to me with any intelligible meaning. I have not cared even to question her; for the book wherein her oracles are written contains no solution of my doubts;—no answer to the heart-cry long ago sent forward into the future.

"What is it you ask of the future?" inquired Mrs. Percival.

There was a long silence, and a deeply breathed sigh.

"The consociations—the heart-relations—the affinities.—what of these? what of these?" Mrs. Hardy spoke with a kind of breathless eagerness. Then, in a calmer way, she added, "But this is all a vain struggle—all a vain beating against the barriers of time. Mortal eye hath not seen, nor mortal ear heard the secret things of eternity. It were better for some of us, I have many times thought, that we had not been born."

"Life is a great blessing," replied Mrs. Percival, almost solemnly. "It is the highest gift of the good Being who created us for happiness. I thank Him daily for the boon."

"Once I felt the same thankfulness——" Mrs. Hardy was about to say more, but she checked herself, and remained silent.

"Of the heart-relations, as to which you were inquiring, my friend, we may speak with some confidence," said Mrs. Percival, repressing all excitement of feeling, and uttering her words in a low, earnest tone. "Heart-qualities will make heart-affinities."

Mrs. Hardy did not reply, but bent her head in a listening attitude.

"Love is the life of man; and love of good, the life of heaven. Of one thing we may all be sure: if we are prepared here for the mansions of blessedness, we shall, in all things, have to eternity the desire of our hearts. The heart-affinities will

all be true affinities. We shall possess what we love—for our desires will all be for the good and the true, and these will be given to us in the fullest measure."

"Oh! can your words be true?" asked Mrs. Hardy;—then as if answering the question to herself, she continued, "Yes, yes—Love is the very life. Trample upon that, and the life perishes. Breathe upon it coldly, and it is blighted, as a fair plant in the later autumn. Yes, yes—Love *is* life—at least woman's life! Oh, that will indeed be heaven, where the loving heart can find a true object. Love! Love! How that word sweeps the spirit backward on golden pinions to the sunny morning of our lives, when the air was full of melody and fragrance, and we dreamed those sweet dreams of the future, never to be realized. But,"—and she started as she spoke,—"forgive me, Mrs. Percival! Again I am betrayed into unwonted utterances. Ah, your words have reached far, far down, and stirred the waters of feeling in depths that have scarcely known a ground-swell for years. I have sometimes thought that my heart was dead—or at least palsied;—its green leaf withered long ago."

"Oh, say not so, my dear madam! The heart can never die, while there is anything to love; for love is its aliment—and you have much to love."

"I have poured out love like water: but—" she added with a changing voice, "I am still betraying myself. There are life-experiences that should be life-secrets. Forget, Mrs. Percival, much that you have heard me say to-night. I could not have spoken so, had you not, strange as it may appear, seemed to me as a sister—yea, with a closer affinity; a sister in spirit, and not in the flesh. Some of your words can never die. As seed in the earth, they are in my mind, and I can already feel them quickening into life. Whether the ground will produce a weakly plant or a vigorous tree, time only can determine."

"You interest me deeply, Mrs. Hardy. Shall we not be friends?"

"True friendships must be reciprocal. I fear that I have nothing to give, Mrs. Percival. You will not always find me even as I am now."

"Let us be friends," was the simple, earnestly-spoken response of Mrs. Percival. Something about Mrs. Hardy had, as she had intimated, awakened in her mind a lively feeling of interest; and it was not from curiosity, but from a higher motive, that she desired to penetrate the mystery that closed around her like a thick veil. She felt that, from some cause, the warm affections of a true and loving heart had been suddenly chilled, and that no sun-rays, ardent enough to melt the frozen fountain, had yet penetrated her bosom.

"Be it so," almost mournfully responded Mrs Hardy, "I want a friendly bosom on which sometimes to lay my head."

An arm was thrown lovingly around her slender form, and the kiss of a sister laid upon her forehead.

"There are kindred spirits in this world," said Mrs. Hardy, in a voice that trembled. "Oh, if ours are really akin!"

"They are, they are—dear friend and sufferer!" replied Mrs. Percival, with a gush of feeling. In a little while she added—"Oh! no; your heart is not palsied; the green leaf is not withered!"

A voice came at this moment warbling from the drawing-room—a voice of uncommon sweetness. The singer had chosen one of the old songs, burdened with melody, that old associations had rendered dear to the hearts of many listeners in the crowded rooms, and especially dear to Mrs. Hardy. Every word was uttered distinctly, and every sentiment of the song given with unusual feeling, as if the singer were an improvisatrice.

"Beautiful!" said Mrs. Percival, as the last exquisite strain died on the air. "It is a long time since I heard that song, always a favourite Never did a piece of music so crowd my thoughts with old memories, as this does now."

Mrs. Hardy made no reply.

"Is it not one of your favourites?"

Mrs. Hardy did not seem to hear the question

"Jane!" A gentleman had come out into the piazza, and now called in a slightly suppressed tone, looking down the garden as he did so. At the sound of his voice Mrs. Hardy gave a slight start.

"Jane!" the call was repeated, as the speaker stepped from the porch, and moved down one of the walks.

"I am here," said Mrs. Hardy; but her voice was cold—Mrs. Percival thought, indifferent.

"I have been looking for you," said Mr. Hardy. 'Won't you come into the house?"

"Certainly, if you desire it," replied Mrs. Hardy, without hesitation, yet exhibiting not the slightest interest. "Will you come back to the house, Mrs. Percival?"

"With pleasure." Mrs. Percival walked beside Mrs. Hardy until they entered the porch, when she fell a little behind, and then separated herself from them; while yet she kept near, a deeply interested observer of every act, expression, and word, that passed between Mrs. Hardy and her husband. They drew close to the piano, where the lady who had been singing was still seated. A crowd were around her; some urging her to sing again. She complied, and, after one or two more pieces, left the instrument.

"Now, Jane, you will sing." Mr. Hardy said

this loud enough to be heard by all who were standing near.

"Oh, no!" was instantly replied, with a kind of shuddering horror; and Mrs. Hardy moved backward. But her husband, as Mrs. Percival observed, retained a firm hold upon her hand, which was drawn within his arm.

"Now don't say no, Mrs. Hardy." And two or three ladies gathered around her.

"Oh no, no! I have not touched the piano nor sung a note for years."

"No good reason why you should not sing now," said her husband, in a mild, kind, persuasive tone. "Now do, Jane, oblige the company and me. It will give us so much pleasure."

Mrs. Hardy's face grew pallid.

"Impossible, Mr. Hardy! How could you ask me?" she said, lifting her eyes to her husband's face, and gazing steadily at him for a moment or two, with an expression which, by those who saw it, was accounted singular, if not mysterious.

"We should all do our part in ministering to the enjoyment of others, you know," remarked Mr. Hardy, smiling blandly, and speaking in a pleasant voice. "The time was," he added, "when my good wife could stir the hearts of crowded assemblies with a voice which I am sure has not yet lost its power. But I fear"—he spoke in a slightly depressed tone—"that she is not as

ready to give pleasure as she was a few years ago How is it, Jane?"

Mr. Hardy recovered his more buoyant tone in the closing sentence, and looked with eyes of tenderness upon his wife.

"I am sure our friends will excuse me," replied Mrs. Hardy, seeming almost to catch her breath as she spoke. "It is impossible to comply with the request to sing. If in any other way I can contribute to the pleasure of the company, I will gladly do so." So saying, she moved back from the centre of the group, and, disengaging her hand from the arm of her husband, made her way quietly to another part of the room.

Mr. Hardy sighed, as he turned partly around, and followed her with earnest glances.

"It is hardly right to force her into doing what is evidently so repugnant to her feelings," said Mrs. Percival, with covert rebuke in her voice.

"Force her, madam!" replied Mr. Hardy in a tone of surprise:—"Heaven knows I desire nothing so much as to see her happy! and it was only in the hope of reviving old feelings by old associations, that I urged her to sing just now. If she had complied, she would have been happier for the effort; and I did hope to have extorted compliance by gentle force. Some of you remember how exquisitely she once performed, and how every lip would be hushed into silence when her

voice broke in melody upon the air. I would give much to hear it, filling this room, as I have heard it in times past."

Mr. Hardy appeared to be deeply moved; and, as if to conceal his emotion, turned away and left the little company that were gathered around him.

"I pity that man from my heart," said a lady, speaking to Mrs. Percival.

"Acting!" was the brief response.

"Oh! no. I can't believe that," replied the lady. "You wrong him."

"Perhaps not," said Mrs. Percival. "If Mrs. Hardy has neither sung nor played for years, was it reasonable in her husband to expect her to do so to-night?"

The lady was silent.

"It was quite the reverse, I say," added Mrs. Percival, a little warmly. "And the fact of his proposing anything of the kind shows him to be an unreasonable man, and gives some clue to the singular state of mind into which his wife has fallen."

The lady shook her head in an incredulous way, and remarked in a light, almost indifferent tone of voice,

"Oh! she is queer;"—and then turned from Mrs. Percival, with an air that was by no means pleasant.

"Queer?" Mrs. Percival said to herself. "How indefinite the word, yet how certain to carry prejudice into the hearer's mind! If there is nothing directly evil to allege against a woman, detraction looks wise, and says 'she is queer;'—and too surely, the heart is closed to sympathy. Ah! these 'queer' people are usually great sufferers The world is not over-patient with them."

A little while afterwards she noticed that Mr. Hardy was the centre of a group of ladies and gentlemen, to whom he was talking in a very animated way. Mrs. Hardy was not on his arm. She sought for her through the crowded rooms, but not finding her, went out into the garden, where she discovered her standing under an arbour, looking more like an immovable statue than a living woman. As she came up, the light streaming out from the open windows, and falling upon her cheeks, glittered among the crystal tears, and told that she was weeping.

CHAPTER III.

Jane Enfield's Early Life.

"The heart that is soonest awake to the flowers
Is always the first to be touch'd by the thorns."—Moore.

THERE are homes, pervaded by love, as an atmosphere;—homes, in which heart meets heart as by the power of a mutual attraction;—homes, where the blessed sunshine streams for ever warm and golden across the threshold. Such was the early home of Jane Enfield. Her father was a man of high honour, tender feelings, and refined tastes. Her mother, just the woman that such a man would choose for a life-partner, gentle, loving, confiding, and exquisitely delicate in all her perceptions. Beautifully did they harmonize in all things; theirs was a marriage for eternity. In this union, two children only were born; and both were daughters, of whom Jane was the youngest by several years.

Very tenderly was she reared; very loving were all the ministrations of her home. To harsh reproofs she was an entire stranger,—but not so

to gentle words of encouragement and praise. It was a theory with their father, that commendation of excellence is better for children than blame for errors and defects. And he so fully acted out his theory, that in no instance was he ever known to utter a direct rebuke. Such was the mental organization of his youngest daughter, that she would have felt words of reproof as heavy blows, or as a blighting wind passing over the fragrant blossoms of her heart. They would have wrought a change in her whole character, saddening her spirit, and filling with clouds the bright sky of her young and happy existence.

Mr. Enfield was a man who loved to praise, and this for all degrees of excellence. In his household he was ever speaking words of approbation. As his daughters advanced towards womanhood, and achieved excellence in their varied studies and accomplishments, his pleasure was constantly finding expression. His tastes made him appreciative; and praise, coming from so good a judge, had in it an element of the highest pleasure.

What a miniature heaven-upon-earth was this home in which Jane Enfield grew up, and in which the blossoms of her young life expanded into womanhood! She herself was refined, and gentle, and loving as an angel. Of the cold, hard, selfish, cruel, social world around her, she had no real knowledge, for her parents had so

little in common with general society, and so few sympathies with the superficial worldly-mindedness of most people whom they happened to know, that they mingled but rarely with others in any very intimate relations.

From their earliest years, Mr. Enfield had taught his children that selfishness is an evil, and that the way to happiness is always the path of duty. He had filled their memories with life-lessons from the Holy Word, so that the ways of wisdom might always be plain before them;—and so that from Divine illustrations they might perceive neighbourly love to be one of the primary elements of a truly religious life.

As a preparation for living in the world, the home education of Edith and Jane Enfield may be regarded as defective. They were kept too much aloof from the world, and were consequently strangers to its real nature. They did not know how selfish and evil it is; nor how few of those whom they saw with smiling lips, and to whose pleasant words they hearkened, had any genuine good will in their hearts.

As Jane progressed towards womanhood, her maturing nature presented new aspects of refinement; and her perceptions of the loving and the beautiful were more exquisite and delicate. In form she was slender, and below the medium stature. Her face, oval in contour, was of fault-

less proportions,—her complexion very fair—her hair, eyebrows, and lashes of a dark chestnut brown—her mouth delicate, and finely shaped. By these exterior things her soul partially revealed itself; and the revelation charmed every beholder. Those who looked into her eyes, felt that they were gazing into a world of spiritual beauty.

Edith was of a less sensitive nature than Jane and therefore better fitted to go out into the world, and meet with an enduring heart the chilling life-experiences that fall to every one s lot. But it was not designed that she should encounter the trying ordeal in store for the younger sister. She had only gained her twentieth year, when, called to a higher life, mortality was cast aside, and the rising spirit clothed with immortality.

It was the first shadow that ever fell upon Mr. Enfield's household, and for a time it was so dark that no light seemed to burn in the dwelling. Jane's heart was almost paralyzed by the stroke In this affliction, a few valued and appreciating friends drew close, in tender sympathy, to the stricken family. Among them was the minister of the church in which they worshipped. He had always felt that, on their part, there had been too great an isolation from society; and that it would have been better for them, and for others, if they had widened their circle of friendly intercourse.

A few weeks after the death of Edith, on one of his visits to the house of affliction, where still the fountain of tears gushed freely, he said to Jane while seeking to pour into her spirit the oil and the wine of consolation—

"There is one way in which you may draw nearer to your angel-sister than in any other."

Jane lifted her eyes to the minister's face with a look of earnest inquiry.

"In heaven all love to do good, and in blessing others they find one of their highest delights. Doing good is a heavenly employment; Edith is now, and will be for ever engaged in this Divine work. If you would draw near to her, and keep near to her, my dear child, you must do on earth what she is doing in heaven."

"Oh, sir! what can I do?"

How almost eagerly was the question asked!

"The Lord's work is all around us," said the good man. "It meets us at every turn in our daily walk; and in faithfully doing the work our hands find to do, we ever serve Him best. But there is one special good work upon which you may enter, and in which I have long desired to see you engaged."

Jane looked up again into the minister's face.

"There are many children around us who have little or no religious instruction at home. These we gather into our Sabbath schools, uniting them

with children who have better advantages. Do you think, Jane, that there is upon earth a more heavenly employment than that of leading such children upwards to the kingdom of our Father? Faithful, earnest, loving teachers are always needed. In our own school they are wanted. Will you not put your hands to the work? Will you not become a toiler in the Lord's vineyard? Your reward will be very sweet."

"I cannot promise now," she replied. "But I will think of what you have said, and talk to father about it."

Mr. Enfield encouraged Jane to do as the minister had suggested, and to the gratification of the latter, she appeared in the school on the succeeding sabbath, and assumed the duties of a teacher. It was soon perceived by the minister, by the superintendent, and by many others, that Jane Enfield's heart was in her work, and that she attracted the children towards her with a kind of fascination. She was unobtrusive and retiring; none of the teachers felt her manner in the least degree repellent; and they soon began to have a closer knowledge of her character, which they found as pure and lovely as her person. Her deep mourning, her quiet, almost sad face, and her eyes that seemed looking in upon her own spirit, instead of out upon the world of nature, awakened towards her a feeling

of tender sympathy, showing itself in a warm grasp of the hand, a loving smile, or words of kindness. But *very* near to her no one could approach; she was so unlike all the rest.

Jane's heart was in her work from the beginning. The children interested her deeply; and as she saw them eagerly hanging on her words while she talked of things good and holy, she felt that the employment was indeed heavenly, and that her own spirit was raised to a purer region.

The superintendent was a young man named Hardy, who took great interest in the school, and was very active in all that concerned its welfare. He was the junior partner in a wealthy mercantile house, and was highly esteemed in the community as a man of energy and probity. With the minister of the church he was a favourite; and they were on terms of the closest intimacy. Mr. Hardy's appearance was decidedly attractive. He possessed a fine, manly person, rather above than below the middle height. In his address, there was an air of frankness, that won for him at the very first a favourable regard; and so far as his general intercourse with men and women was concerned, this regard rather increased than diminished. All spoke well of John Hardy.

Singularly enough, Jane Enfield was not favourably impressed by the handsome young superintendent. There was something about him which

she so disliked, that she seriously thought of not returning again to the school after the first day's experience. But this feeling she struggled to overcome; and was successful, at least so far as not to suffer it to influence her conduct. On the succeeding Sabbath, she was in her place. During the afternoon, Mr. Hardy took occasion to speak a few words to her about the children in her class, and the modes of instruction adopted in the school. Sufficiently well bred to control her feelings, Jane listened with apparent interest, and answered with entire self-possession in her own sweet way. The superintendent lingered near for a little while, detained by an irresistible attraction, and then passed on to another part of the room. The lovely young girl had interested him deeply from her first appearance at the school.

Though an attendant at the same church, he had heretofore looked upon her only, as it were, from a distance, and with no thought of ever making her an intimate acquaintance. Now she had been brought so near, that something like familiar personal intercourse was involved, and the superintendent was in no way disinclined to profit by the circumstance. It was an easy thing for him to make occasions for exchanging a word or two with her, as often as three or four times during school hours every Sabbath, and this without attracting attention.

The first unfavourable impressions experienced by Miss Enfield gradually wore off. She could not help being struck with the young superintendent's earnest devotion of himself to the welfare of the Sabbath school, and indeed to all matters of public good, so far as she had opportunity for observation. He was the president of a missionary society connected with the church; and showed much zeal in the cause for the promotion of which the society had been established. He was also a very active member of a society for aiding the sick and indigent. The minister, and several prominent men in the church, came to the school every Sabbath, and showed by their manner towards Mr. Hardy, that they held him in no ordinary estimation. As Jane grew better acquainted with the teachers, she found the general sentiment towards the superintendent to be warmly eulogistic. His praise was on every lip.

Yet, despite this favourable testimony, there was something about Mr. Hardy that Jane Enfield could not like. She blamed herself for the feeling, and strove to gain a mastery over it. Thus it found a gradual diminution; and as it wore away in the progress of time, the lovely girl experienced a sense of pleasure at the change in her impressions, because she deemed that change a tribute of justice to the real worth of a man whom others seemed to regard as the possessor of every moral excellence.

It was soon plain to others, if not to Jane herself, that Mr. Hardy's tenderer sentiments were becoming interested in the young teacher. After the lapse of a few months, he found reason for calling upon her at her father's house, during the Sabbath intervals, and this almost every week The alleged purpose of these visits was to consult with her on some special matters concerning the school; the real object to gain a more intimate personal acquaintance with herself and her family. The pretexts for calling were generally framed with much ingenuity, and as they were supported by facts, they readily lost the aspect of excuses. One week he had discovered that a scholar, absent from her class on the preceding sabbath, was ill, and he called to suggest the propriety of a visit to the invalid; on the next, the absence of another, he had learned, was occasioned by a lack of decent clothing, her parents being poor, and he had called to enlist the teacher's generous sympathies in behalf of the child. There was always a reason for calling, which removed every suspicion from the mind of Jane, that the excellent superintendent had any other purpose than to enlist her heart more deeply in the good work to which, in a spirit of genuine regard for others, she had put her hands.

Mr. Enfield, who knew Mr. Hardy by common reputation, and was in the habit of meeting him

occasionally in business circles, had formed in a general way, a favourable opinion regarding him. The fact of his calling to see Jane, explained though it always was by the daughter to be only a visit having reference to her duties in the Sabbath school, produced a feeling of uneasiness on the father's part, and caused him not only to observe the young merchant more closely, but to institute inquiries about him in all directions. The result of these inquiries was perhaps more satisfactory than personal observation. All men spoke of him in words of praise.

As he had impressed the daughter, so did Mr Hardy impress the father. There was a tone of character about the man that had in it something disagreeable to both of them. Yet opposed to this was the fact of a bland, courteous, gentlemanly exterior, united with a winning grace of manner rarely seen, a devotion of nearly all the time not occupied in business to deeds of general benevolence; and a reputation among his fellow-men that was unmarred by a single blemish. He had, besides, a well-stored mind; and his tastes, if not so thoroughly educated and refined as those of Mr. Enfield and his daughter, were yet more than ordinarily appreciative.

Steadily did Mr. Hardy draw nearer and nearer to Miss Enfield, attracted by a loveliness the fascination of which was irresistible; and as

steadily, under the charm of his winning manners, did the feelings of repulsion at first awakened in her heart gradually wear away. After the lapse of a few months, Mr. Hardy became a constant visitor at the house. This could not long continue without a declaration of his purpose, which was first made to the father.

Though not altogether unexpected, the declaration seriously embarrassed Mr. Enfield, for his mind was very far from being made up on a subject which had troubled him from the first moment of its unwelcome intrusion upon his thoughts.

"Frankly, Mr. Hardy," was his answer, "I cannot say that your proposition gives me pleasure."

It was plain from the way in which the response was met by the young merchant, that he had anticipated an entirely different reception. His whole manner was that of a man suddenly startled by an unexpected and disagreeable event.

"May I ask the reason why?" he inquired, as soon as he had recovered a little, and could trust himself to speak. "Does not my character stand fair in the community?"

"None stands fairer, Mr. Hardy," was the calm reply.

"Have you any ground of personal objection against me, Mr. Enfield?"

"No, sir. Personally I have for you a high regard."

"My worldly prospects are good. I have already accumulated some property, and I have business relations of the safest and most promising character."

"A consideration that should always be secondary in matters of the heart," said Mr. Enfield, "and one that has little weight in my mind. Marriage, Mr. Hardy, is a thing of such high importance, that we should keep all the motives affecting its consummation as far above mere prudential considerations as possible. Internal fitness should be the great operative law in all such unions. Harmony of tastes and ends should first be regarded. It is this, my young friend, that makes me hesitate. So far as external things are concerned, I see only the desirable in such a connexion as you propose; but of the heart-fitness I am not so well assured."

"I only wish," replied Mr. Hardy, with considerable ardour, "that I had a window in my breast, so that you could look down into my heart."

This answer to his words did not produce the favourable effect that was intended. It was regarded by Mr. Enfield as something dramatic. "None but the Great Creator can look down into the heart's secret chambers," was replied, almost solemnly to this remark. Then, after a pause, Mr. Enfield continued—

"A woman's affections, Mr. Hardy, are a sacred thing,—they are her very life; and he who takes upon himself their guardianship, assumes a holy and responsible duty. A true woman loves, independent of all worldly circumstances; but if she discovers, after marriage, that she has mistaken appearances for qualities, and that the beautiful land outspread before her enchanted vision, and towards which her love-laden bark moved gently onwards, was only a deluding *mirage*, the after desolation of heart, reaching through all her sad lifetime, words have no power to describe. Ah, sir! in view of this, you must not wonder that I hesitate, when the question of my daughter's happiness or misery is the theme of consideration: and this I regard as the question now at issue. Your happiness, also, is no less at stake; for the man who is destined to fail in meeting the heart-anticipations of the woman he weds, is surely planting thorns in his own pillow, as he leads her to the altar. Wretchedness in marriage is a mutual doom; though in the sad relations, woman always suffers most, because she feels the deepest. There are few minds so delicately organized as that of my daughter, and the knowledge of this has always made me tremble when the thought of her marriage has come as an unwelcome intruder. Think well of this matter, Mr. Hardy —look closely into your own heart;—pause here.

and re-examine the whole question. It is impossible, from the few opportunities you have had of observing my daughter, that you can understand her true character; and any mistake will prove fatal to the peace of both. She is not an ordinary woman, with ordinary perceptions and views of life. She will not be happy in marriage, as a large class of women are happy. With her, it will be positive happiness or positive misery. For your own sake, therefore, Mr. Hardy, as well as for the sake of my daughter, give this subject a renewed consideration."

"I deeply appreciate all you say," was the unhesitating answer. "I have pondered the subject long and well, and have, from the beginning of my acquaintance with your daughter, observed her with the utmost care. My position, as superintendent of the school where she is a teacher, has given me good opportunities for knowing her true character; and every aspect of it has filled me with admiration. Truly and tenderly do I love her, Mr. Enfield; and, I trust, that I am not at all unworthy to be loved by her in return. This I know, that I am ready to devote all I have and am to the work of making her future life happy. If to my hands is given the task of making the path in which her feet are to walk, it shall be smooth, and straight, and soft as a bed of roses. If the helm of her life-bark be resigned to me,

she shall be piloted through tranquil waters. Ah, sir! do not fear for the future of your child. If love be the aliment of her soul, love shall be her's in unstinted measure. Give her to me, Mr. Enfield, and I will treasure the precious gift with more than a miser's affection for his hoarded gold."

Mr. Enfield sighed. The impression made upon him was that of making him look upon Mr. Hardy as one in a play, who acted his part with enthusiasm. Being a man with almost intuitive perceptions of character, he was not easily to be deceived.

"Have you spoken to my daughter on this subject?" he asked, almost abruptly.

"No, sir," was returned with the utmost suavity of manner. "Not until you were advised of my sentiments, could I in honour make them known to her."

"I must have time for reflection and consultation," said Mr. Enfield.

"Certainly, certainly." There was a manifest depression in the young man's tones. "And yet I had hoped that my frank avowal of a preference for your daughter, would have met with as frank an acceptance in return."

Mr. Enfield did not reply to this remark, which, while it failed to raise the suitor in his estimation, had a depressing effect upon his own mind. He

saw that the young man's perceptions were at fault;—that the objections he had endeavoured to urge were not clearly comprehended;—that, in his eagerness to possess a coveted object, he was willing to take all risks, even the risk of his child's happiness;—that the momentous act of marriage was not elevated in his thought into anything like its just importance.

"How long a time will you require, Mr. Enfield?" The voice and manner of Mr. Hardy betrayed a great change in his feelings. He had come to the father as a suitor, with a full measure of self-confidence. No one knew better than himself the high place he held in the good opinion of all men; and no one's good opinion on that subject exceeded his own. He was virtuous; not so much the result of internal purity, as from a certain hereditary coldness, to which was added a powerful accessory—love of reputation. He was active in works of benevolence; but the main stimulus was the praise of men. He was amiable, affable, self-denying—in a word, gentlemanly in his intercourse with all classes of people; but the "window in his breast," one of his favourite allusions, would have shown the moving impulse to be meanly selfish. Nor was he any stranger to the fact, that he had an attractive, manly person, such as any woman might be proud of in a husband. Externally, therefore, he regarded himself

worthy to claim the hand of any lady in the land; and self-love in no way made him depreciate his internal qualities.

Mr. Enfield's hesitation wounded the suitor's complacent self-estimation. He was not greatly surprised at the father's manifested reluctance tc yield his consent at the first word. Such yielding would scarcely have seemed decorous. But after the more earnest explanation of himself, which he had given in response to the father's natural expressions of doubt as to his ability to make his daughter happy, and after his ardent declaration of deep love, he looked only for a generous acquiescence. The change, produced by a state of things so unexpected, was apparent in the altered manner in which he asked the question—"How long a time will you require, Mr. Enfield?"

"A week—perhaps two." The voice was depressed—almost sad.

"Two weeks, Mr. Enfield? The days of so long a period will seem to me as years!"

The tones in which this was said sounded overwrought, and the manner a little too dramatic. Neither made any favourable impression on Mr. Enfield, who was a man of accurate perceptions, and one who could not be deceived when every moral faculty was aroused into keenest action.

"Two weeks may be a very brief period in which to settle questions of infinite importance.

Let me enjoin upon you to pass the time in the most rigid self-inquiry. Never have you stood, as now, at a point in life where the next advancing footstep was destined to determine so much of good or evil in all the coming future. That step once taken, it can never be retraced. Onwards in the new way you must go, be the path rough or smooth,—the sky bending over you bright with sunshine, or veiled by the cloudy tempest. And remember, my young friend, that you will not walk this way alone. Another, and one capable of suffering far beyond yourself, must be your wretched companion, should the union you seek prove to be disastrous. Oh! no, sir! two weeks for consideration is not a long period."

For some minutes the two sat in silence, each with his eyes cast down. Then Mr. Hardy said, in as calm a voice as he could assume—

"In a fortnight I will see you again, and with the fondly cherished hope in my heart, that all I have asked will be cheerfully given."

And so they parted, neither of them feeling happier for the interview.

CHAPTER IV.

Presentiments.

"Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at best, but oft a spear:
On its sharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires."

YOUNG.

On the following Sabbath, one teacher was missing from school, who had never been away from her post since she assumed the holy office of lifting the thoughts of little children upwards towards heaven. This absence was noted, and the questions, "Where can she be?"—"Is she sick?"—and the like, passed from lip to lip. The superintendent had no satisfactory reply for any of the queries made to him on the subject. It was moreover observed by many, that he had a depressed, troubled aspect; and that his duties were performed with scarcely anything of his accustomed ardour.

Jane had appeared at church in the morning with her parents; after the service, however, she had failed to linger, as was sometimes the case, to meet a congenial friend, but had hurried away, so that when Mr Hardy gained the vestibule of

the church, she was nowhere to be seen. Her non-appearance at school in the afternoon he regarded as an ill omen.

On the following Sabbath the young man, in a state of nervous suspense, waited at the church door, a thing unusual with him, in the hope of receiving at least one glance from the beautiful eyes of Miss Enfield; and this glance was thrown upon him. The close veil was partially drawn aside, as she came up the broad stone stairway into the vestibule, and one ray of intelligence sent as a messenger of love to his heart, giving to every nerve of his being a delicious thrill.

"I can wait now," he said within himself, as he entered the church and made his way to his own seat.

"Her heart is true as the needle. That glance has scattered all doubt to the wind. She is mine —mine—mine!"

The failure of Miss Enfield to appear in her place at the school that afternoon did not seriously trouble the superintendent. He ascribed it to the right cause—a maidenly delicacy which made her shrink from meeting him under the circumstances already alluded to.

At the expiration of the period named by Mr Enfield, the young merchant called to receive the answer to his proposal. It was favourable;—more favourable however, in appearance than in

reality. Mr. Enfield was very far from being satisfied. He did not believe that his daughter would be happy with Mr. Hardy, as a woman should be happy in married life. He did not believe him to be one who had a just perception of woman's nature, or who was capable of appreciating her wants. But the handsome, specious, courteous lover had, it was clearly seen, already made too deep an impression on Jane's mind to leave any hope for a successful opposition. And so, after many long, sad, and perplexing conferences between the father and mother, it was decided to let things take their course.

For nearly a year after consent was yielded on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Enfield, they managed to defer the period of their daughter's marriage, all the while cherishing a faint hope that something would occur to prevent the fulfilment of a betrothal which had, in their opinion, no golden promise. During this year, Mr. Hardy was observed with eyes possessing a deeper intuition than he imagined possible; and phases of his character were seen which he little suspected that any one could discern. The confidence of possession threw him more off his guard; and natural impulses imaged themselves with more and more truthfulness in the ordinary actions of his life. Mr. Enfield discovered, to his dismay, that below the fair, attractive surface of the young man, was

a cold, selfish spirit, that with a steady, scarcely perceived, but never intermitted gravitation, drew everything to the centre of his life, and made all things minister to his will;—that, in private, as well as in public, he acted freely only where he could keep things under his own control;—that although he was not given to contention, and rarely, if ever, sought to gain his ends by open, manly, outspoken opposition to the opinions or modes of action suggested by others, he yet often seemed to yield when, in reality, he was but devising the hidden means for carrying out his own views, and that in a manner so unobtrusive as not to disturb the placid current in which events were flowing.

There was another fact, the discovery of which filled the mind of Mr. Enfield with gloomy forebodings. Almost imperceptibly, a change was coming over the mind of his daughter. The girlish cheerfulness, lost for a time on the death of her sister, had come back with all its sweet influences; but now it was again passing away—passing, the father believed, never more to return. So far as he could see, the conduct of her lover was not marked by any disregard for her wishes; and yet it often happened that she was pensive,—to use no stronger word,—after meeting him, and passing a few hours in his company.

As the day finally appointed for the marriage

drew near, Jane's spirits were depressed rather than elated; and to the frequent congratulations of friends on account of the approaching nuptials, she rarely responded with any degree of warmth. It was no uncommon thing for her mother, if coming upon her suddenly, to find her in tears; and when questioned as to the reason, she always answered with evasion.

"I fear, my child," her mother said to her, a few weeks before the time when the marriage rites were to be celebrated; "I fear that something is wrong."—She had found her weeping.—"Will you not open all your heart to me? If there has been any error in regard to the true state of your own feelings,—if Mr. Hardy is not really loved as a woman should love the man who is to be her life-companion—"

"Dear mother!" exclaimed the daughter, breaking in upon the sentence, and looking up into her face, while a light beaming from her countenance glistened in the tears that were falling over her cheeks—"No woman ever loved more deeply, more truly, than I love; and I can imagine no path in life that would not lead through a wilderness were he not by my side. No, mother; do not doubt my heart. It is true in every impulse."

"Then why is it, my precious child! that I so often find you in tears? Why are you so changed? so unhappy?"

"I am not unhappy!" Jane spoke with surprise in her voice.

"You are not as you were. There is a shadow on your feelings. You are much alone—are silent—often weep. Ah, my child! these are not the signs of happiness."

"Marriage is a very solemn thing, mother." Jane spoke in a low voice, full of emotion and full of meaning.

"It is, my dear girl," was the simple response.

"And as I approach the hour when I am to take upon myself those solemn vows and sacred duties, I feel a shrinking and trembling that grow more oppressive every hour. Dear mother! what if I should fail to be to my husband all that he anticipates? What if I should disappoint him, and he should turn from me coldly, as one not worthy of his love? The thought haunts me daily, disturbs my sleep, and fills my eyes with tears! If it should prove thus, my heart would break. I could not live if he grew cold towards me—if he were ever to regard me with indifference!"

"These are but ideal fears, my child," replied Mrs. Enfield. "Do not cherish them a single moment; for it sometimes happens that, by cherishing the ideal, we give to it an actual existence. A loving heart will keep alive responsive feelings; and a wife who truly loves, and truly desires to

bless her husband, cannot, unless in strangely exceptional cases, fail to receive her reward."

Jane sighed deeply. After a moment or two, she said, "The lot of an unloved wife, mother! Oh! is it not a terrible thing? Death would be, instead, a sweet consummation."

"How strangely you talk, my child! What is the meaning of it?" asked Mrs. Enfield. "Can it be that you have reason to question the love Mr. Hardy bears for you?"

"Oh, no—no—no, mother!" was almost wildly answered,—"not the shadow of a reason. I know that he loves me with his whole heart. I know that I am very dear to him, and that he will do all in his power to make me happy. But, mother"—and she spoke more calmly—"men have a different mental organization from that of women. We are very unlike each other, and cannot always comprehend each other's states and feelings."

"True, my love."

"I do not think I always understand Mr. Hardy; and I am afraid he does not always understand me."

"Time, and closer union, will enable you to understand each other better," said Mrs. Enfield.

Jane sighed again, as she remarked—

"Ah! it is that closer union, involving a closer vision, that I strangely fear. Shall I be to

him then as I am now? Coldness, indifference, blame, would kill me outright!"

"Do not keep your high ideal of the married life so distinctly before your mind," said Mrs. Enfield. "None are perfect here—and there are few perfectly happy marriages. Do not expect too much. Be ready to yield forbearance, as you must receive it. Mr. Hardy is an inhabitant of earth; a human being with hereditary evils to overcome;—not a purified spirit in heaven. He cannot be always the same to you, nor can he always present the same loving aspect; for in the purification and elevation, through which I trust he is passing, changing moods are inevitable, and you must be prepared for them, and meet them with patience and fortitude. After every evening of shadows and depression, will succeed the morning, with its cheering light; and if the evening be spent in prayer and hope, instead of in gloomy repining, the morning will be all the brighter, and the day that succeeds will be the longer. The path of life winds not always among flowers, my child. The dreary desert must be passed, as well as the fragrant meadows. The Pilgrims dwelt not always upon the delectable mountains."

"Ah, mother!" replied Jane, weeping freely; "I know it must all be as you say. What I fear is, the failure of strength to endure the roughness and trials of the way."

"It is from the STRONG that we receive strength. 'As the day may demand, shall our strength ever be.' Do not doubt—do not tremble—do not fear. If the deeper and sometimes sadder experiences of life bring pain to the mind, they also give new capacities for enjoyment. There is a blessed compensativeness in every life-relation. Even when the all-eclipsing sun has withdrawn, and left the night to reign for a season, the firmament has still its myriads of stars."

In such a conference, almost on the eve of the wedding-day, how little was there, alas! for a spirit so delicately organized as that of Jane Enfield, to rest upon in hopeful anticipations. The words of her mother did not throw a single ray upon the future, nor give any new strength to her heart; but rather oppressed her with a vague sense of coming evil.

The approaching nuptials gave to the lovers a more unreserved intimacy. Mr. Hardy came very frequently to the house; while Mr. Enfield encouraged his visits and intimacy, in order to read him the more closely. As the young man, from feeling more and more at home in the family, indulged in greater freedom of action, so that his outer seeming gave a more exact image of his inner life. Jane was constantly made sensible of one strong point of contrast between him and her father. Very gentle, very thoughtful, and very

tender was Mr. Enfield in his paternal relation. He never met his daughter without a pleasant word, nor left her without a parting kiss. Every one of her acts, that in any way involved a service, was sure to have its reward in some approving acknowledgment. Thus was she stimulated to a daily thoughtfulness in regard to his comfort, and a daily consultation of his tastes. Not so with her lover. *Mr. Hardy rarely praised.* If she sang his favourite pieces—and she did sing with rare perfection—he filled the succeeding silence with no warmly admiring words. He frequently asked her to play or sing, and he really enjoyed her exquisite performance; but the closing of the piece was more frequently followed by a request for another, than by any remark upon that which had been given. If he expressed approval, it was oftener of the composer than of the singer—oftener of the piece than of the charming execution.

Jane never sang without entering, with all the rare perceptions of a truly poetic mind, into the sentiment expressed in the song, and all her heart's emotions were perceived in her voice. She felt the beauty, pathos, or inspiration of the words, and uttered them as if they were improvisations. The lack of all truly appreciative response on the part of her lover, stimulated her to even higher achievements; but the result was not changed.

Her performances struck him as most exquisite, and he felt a glow of pride as he thought how far, as *his* wife, she would eclipse the common crowd. Even while she was listening eagerly for some spoken approval, he was mentally picturing the admiration she would excite, and the exultation he would feel!

In dress, Jane exhibited a rare and delicate taste. This, also, Mr. Hardy saw; yet, strangely enough, he never indicated, in any way, his appreciation of the fact. But if the slightest want of harmony in colour, or the slightest apparent deviation from taste in any portion of her attire met his glance, he was sure to remark upon it, after they had become more intimate; nor was this always done in choicely selected words. His pride in the rarely endowed maiden was, we fear, stronger than his love for her. She was to be the minister of his pleasures, the agent of his worldly ambition; and, in dreaming of this, he forgot that she had a hungering and a thirsting spirit, that would droop and die if the bread and wine of life were not given to her freely.

No wonder that, as Jane Enfield approached nearer and nearer to the wedding-day, her heart grew faint, and she sometimes wished that she might die. Yet never did woman love with more intensity of feeling. Up to her betrothed she looked, as to a purer being, possessed of all man's superior

endowments; and his failure to give the warm approval, for which her spirit so longed and prayed, was rather attributed to actual deficiencies in herself—a failing, on her part, to attain the high standard of excellence which he expected in the woman who was to be his life-companion—than to coldness or indifference to her state of feeling.

And so the time moved on, until the marriage-hour arrived, and the beautiful, accomplished, and loving girl, completed the sweet cycle of her maidenhood, and entered the new and higher sphere towards which she had advanced with trembling hope and fear.

CHAPTER V.

The First Contest.

"One thing, sirs, full safely dare I say,
That loving friends each other must obey,
If they would long remain in company.
Love will not be constrain'd by mastery:
When mastery cometh, the God of love anon
Beateth his wings, and farewell! he is gone!"

CHAUCER.

It was the desire of Mr. and Mrs. Enfield that their daughter should remain with them, at least for a time, and that her husband should make their house his home. This was the desire also of the young wife; expressed, as well before as after the marriage. But Mr. Hardy had made up his mind, from the very first, that he would have a home of his own, that he might be master there; and he had never wavered from this purpose for a single moment. All the warmly expressed wishes of his bride and her parents did not weigh with him a feather in the opposing scale. It was one of his theories, that, in marriage, man was the head, and must rule;—that his judgment was to determine what was best; and that what was his will, ought to be a wife's pleasure. Accordingly,

at the very beginning of his wedded relation, he sought to make the gentle, loving one who had given her happiness into his keeping, comprehend this as his view of the matter;—not in clear, outspoken words, indeed, but in such hints as he deemed clear enough, yet not so broad as to give offence.

But the idea of rule on one part, and submission on the other, had never been even remotely conceived of by the young bride; and the intimations given by her husband were not comprehended. All her life long she had lived in an atmosphere of mutual love, forbearance, concession, and the denial of self for the pleasure of others. The utterance of a wish by any member of the family, was the signal for all to do some part in the gratification of that desire. Love, not self-will, or nicely discriminated precedence, was the ruling power in Mr. Enfield's household; and if any wore the chain of obedience, the flower-links were so light, that they were not in the slightest degree felt to be a burden.

It was a new experience in Jane's life, to find her wishes altogether disregarded; and, under the circumstances, a very painful one. She had felt certain that an expressed desire on her part to remain with her parents, at least for a short period after their marriage, would have received a cordially approving response from her husband;

and when he met her proposal with the smiling remark—"Young married people should always begin life in their own home," she did not imagine that behind the words lay a resolute purpose to make the sentiment a practical one in their case. At no time previous to their marriage had she urged the matter, for she believed that her lover would esteem it a pleasure to meet her wishes. Whenever an allusion was made to the subject, either by Jane or her parents, the young man did not fail to reply in the words just given, or in others of similar import; but he spoke so mildly and pleasantly, that Jane, at least, had no suspicion of the fact, that his mind was made up to remove her from the home of her parents as soon after their marriage as might be practicable.

"There is a house in Garden Street, which I think will suit us exactly," said Mr. Hardy, just one week after their wedding-day. They were sitting alone in the dimness of the falling twilight, the young wife's head resting lovingly upon the bosom of her husband, and her heart full to overflowing of new and glad emotions.

Jane did not reply; but her husband was conscious, though not from any sign perceptible by the senses, that the remark gave her no pleasure.

"The situation is a very desirable one; the house new and handsome. I want you to go with me to look at it to-morrow."

Jane was on the point of saying that she would go, but she could not trust herself to speak, and so, almost from necessity, remained silent. This silence annoyed Mr. Hardy, who in part attributed it to the right cause.

"Will you go with me?" he asked, in a tone which, to Jane's ears, was so new, that it startled —almost frightened her.

She rose up quickly from her reclining posture, and said—

"Of course, Mr. Hardy, I will go with you!"

"I did not know," he answered a little coldly "Silence is not always to be taken for consent."

Jane felt an icy chill go shuddering through her whole being.

"You know," said Mr. Hardy, after both had remained for nearly a minute without again speaking, "that I have intimated my wish, from the beginning, to have a house of my own; and not for an instant have I ever designed anything else." He spoke with unusual gravity of tone and manner, and with something of an imperative air. "When a man takes a wife, he expects to have a home of his own, and household goods of his own. If he be a true man, he will be satisfied with nothing less. I certainly cannot, and will not be."

For some moments it seemed to the young wife as if her heart ceased to beat, and her lungs to

respire. Then, in spite of her strong effort at self-control, tears gushed from her eyes, and sobs convulsed her frame.

Now, for such an exhibition of feeling Mr. Hardy could see no real cause, and he very coolly set it down to the account of design on Jane's part, as if she were striving to work upon his sensibilities, and thus to extort from him an acquiescence in her views. This only made him the more determined to execute his purpose. So he uttered not one gentle or soothing word, but sat perfectly silent until the grieving creature at his side had, by many efforts, repressed the upheaving emotions of a stricken heart.

Neither referred again to the subject. When the family met at the tea-table, half an hour afterwards, the quick eyes of Mr. Enfield read trouble in the face of his daughter, for it was picturing its image there, even through a veil of smiles.

"I have found a house to-day," said Mr. Hardy, soon after they were seated at the table, "which I think will just suit us." Both Mr. and Mrs. Enfield turned their eyes upon him with looks of surprise. "It is in Garden Street; one of the pleasantest situations in the city. Jane and I are going together to look at it in the morning."

"Don't think of such a thing," replied Mr Enfield.

"Not for an instant," said the mother. "We are not going to let you altogether deprive us of our daughter. She cannot leave her old home yet, Mr. Hardy. It is large enough for you and her; so don't talk of houses or housekeeping. When we consented that you should marry our child, we did not relinquish all claims upon her."

The young man, quite self-possessed, as he could always be when there was sufficient reason to warrant an effort, blandly replied, "I have never thought of anything else. It is one of my favourite theories, you know, that every young married couple should at once set up a home-establishment for themselves. To me, life's highest ideal is a *home*."

"We only ask you to defer the change for a few short months," said Mrs. Enfield, almost in a pleading voice. "It will be easier for us to part with our daughter then, than it is now."

"We shall not be far from you," answered the young man, still with a pleasant smile and tone. "Jane can see you every day."

Thus, smilingly, yet in real earnest, the controversy went on between the parents and the husband; but the young wife said not a word,—a circumstance that did not escape the observation of Mr. Enfield.

"Suppose," he said, "that we leave the question to be decided by Jane."

'She is a party interested," was quickly answered by Mr. Hardy.

"So are we all," said Mr. Enfield.

A slight flush came into the daughter's face, when this reference was made to her; but she did not respond.

"You know very well," remarked Mr. Hardy, in a laughing way, "how she will decide. But our full-fledged bird must leave the mother-nest, and build one for herself. Her wings are strong enough to bear her up into the pure air of heaven, and she will be all the happier for the effort."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Enfield, perceiving that Mr Hardy was altogether in earnest, and that their daughter was ill at ease while the conversation went on, deemed it wisest to say no more. A slight feeling of embarrassment was experienced for a time by all parties. But Mr. Enfield broke through this by the introduction of a pleasant theme; and no farther reference was made to the subject.

From that time, Jane was conscious of a strange feeling of pressure and constriction over her heart. The unyielding spirit of her husband deeply disappointed her. Through many hours of the night that followed, while he was in a sound slumber, she lay weeping the bitterest tears that had ever wet her eyelids.

There are many who will not sympathize very

deeply with the young wife in her wretchedness,—who will deem her unreasonable, or weak, or even selfish. But she did not mean to be either. Love was her very life; and she had loved Mr. Hardy because she believed him pure, good, and unselfish; one who loved her with a devotion equal to her own;—one, who would be to her clinging woman's nature, as the manly oak to the upreaching vine;—one, who would love and cherish her with even more than the tenderness with which the best of fathers had loved and cherished her from childhood upwards. She had never intended to set up her will against his; and as little had she dreamed that her husband would assume the love-extinguishing position, that his will was to rule in all things. Had her parents not seemed so earnestly desirous that she should remain with them for a time, she would have yielded to her husband's wishes the moment she saw that he really preferred the new arrangement proposed. Indeed, she had never regarded him as really in earnest about the matter, until he now mentioned a particular house, as one that he thought would suit them. His doing this, in so cool and determined a way, after he had clearly understood the feelings both of herself and of her parents, was what threw the shadow over her heart. She saw in the act a moral characteristic not plainly apparent before—a savouring of self-

love and self-will. It was soon—yes, too soon after their closer union by the marriage rite—to discover, that he loved and regarded her only less than himself; and that he was ready to defer to her wishes only when these did not run counter to his own. Too rudely was the veil torn from her eyes, and her vision opened to realities, the knowledge of which almost palsied her heart.

The next morning, no reference was made at the breakfast-table to the subject discussed on the previous evening; but yet it was in the thoughts of all. In Jane's heart had sprung up the hope that her husband, after reflection, would have concluded to yield his wishes to theirs And with this hope, there had also quickened in her mind the spontaneous purpose to refer all to him, to advocate the establishment of a new home, because his heart was dwelling fondly upon hat ideal. As this aspect of the case assumed a more distinct form, and was at length regarded by her as a verity, the light which had grown so dim blazed forth again, and her spirit felt an upward, bounding impulse. Her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled as of old. Already were her lips preparing to utter the proposal that she should go with her husband and look at the house in Garden Street, while pleasant images of the home she would beautify and make delightful for the beloved of her heart were beginning to fill her mind, when

he said to her, in a quiet, cool, almost imperative tone of voice—

"Come, Jane, get ready as quickly as you can. You know we are to look at that house this morning."

It seemed as if the light of the sun had suddenly been removed, leaving her in thick darkness;—as if the warm air around her had become icy cold. The colour left her cheeks and lips, and the brightness of her beautiful eyes grew dim. All this Mr. Hardy saw and understood—or, to speak more correctly, *thought* he understood. He was displeased, and, to some degree irritated, by this "wilfulness," as he mentally termed it, on the part of his wife.

"One of us must rule,"—such were his rapid thoughts—"and the sooner it is determined which is to be master, the better." Then speaking aloud, he said, very slowly, very emphatically, and very resolutely, "Jane, it will be better for you to understand at the outset, that I am a man not given to vacillation. It will save both you and me a great amount of trouble. I am, moreover, always in earnest in anything that I propose, and I usually grow more earnest and resolute under opposition. Now it is plain that touching this matter of housekeeping, you have either not supposed me in earnest, or you have believed that a well-sustained opposition would lead me

to alter my purpose. In this you have been altogether mistaken. I have been in earnest from the beginning; and to speak my mind plainly, I did think, Jane, that your love had in it enough of the unselfish element to lead you to give up something of your own preferences, in order to meet your husband's wishes. It seems, however, that none of us are perfect. Our ideal angels prove at last but women, the children of unhappy Eve!"

Poor Jane grew white as death, and caught her breath convulsively, like one suddenly deprived of vital air. She was standing when her husband began to speak, but strength forsook her limbs, and she sank, almost powerless, into a chair.

Mr. Hardy was not in the least softened towards her; for his interpretation of the effect produced by what he had said, was as wide from the truth in regard to her state of mind, as pole is from pole.—"It is useless, Jane," he continued, "to set your will against mine. We had better understand each other completely at the first; and then all after misunderstanding and consequent unhappiness will be prevented. As the husband, my judgment of things, and my decisions, must, to a certain extent, prevail. There cannot be two heads in any government—national, municipal, or domestic. This is self-evident. One has to rule, in all cases, or else disorder, discord, and

anarchy, must be in the ascendant. As God is the head of the church, so is man the head of his family. Thus it has been Divinely ordained; and any deviation from this order is fraught with most disastrous consequences. In taking upon yourself the vows of a wife, you have consented to all this as a Christian woman; and I am sure a moment's reflection will give clearness to your mind, and a willing, cheerful, submissive spirit to your heart. If not, then have I greatly mistaken my wife. Heretofore, as a daughter, the will of your parents has been, more or less, the law of your life. But that law is abrogated. Your desire must be now unto your husband. His wishes, not theirs, must now be governing motives I regret that you did not see this for yourself. The task of bringing it to your remembrance is no pleasant one."

"I speak very plainly," resumed Mr. Hardy, after a pause, and seeing that there was no movement towards a response on the part of his pale, statue-like wife;—"it is, as I before said, best to do so. Clear apprehensions at the beginning prevent a world of subsequent trouble. If all men, at the commencement of their married lives, would speak out plainly as I do now, there would be far less of misunderstanding and contention, than prevail to a sad extent, marring and deforming so many fair households. Now, I wish you

to bear in mind particularly, that, when I express a desire for anything, I am in earnest; and that it will be useless for you to make any attempt to circumvent or turn me from my purpose. Your wishes I cannot, of course, disregard; and to meet them will ever be, I trust, one of the purest pleasures of my life. But, should these wishes, at any time, lift themselves against my own declared purposes—purposes that I have set myself deliberately, and from reason, to carry out, as in the present case—your efforts to turn me aside from the objects I seek to attain, will be like beating the air; or worse, beating a statue that will only bruise the tender hands which strike its marble surface."

Still the young wife sat before him, with her long lashes laid closely down upon her pallid cheeks, her hueless lips slightly parted, and her hands clasped over her bosom. Other eyes would have seen in that form an image of despair; but it did not appear so to the husband, whose eyes looked through a blinding veil.

"We understand each other at last, Jane," he said, in a slightly softening tone; "and now, like a dear good wife, get yourself ready, and let us go and look at our new home."

But she neither moved nor spoke.

"Jane!"

There was no response.

"Jane!" He laid his hand upon hers, and, as he did so, a thrill passed through his frame, for that hand was icy as the hand of death.

"Jane!"

He might as well have spoken to the dead; for, ere the sound of his voice had died upon the air, she fell forward, and his arms only saved her from striking the floor with a heavy concussion.

Love was the life of her soul, and he had well nigh trampled it out, with the crushing strokes of his iron heel!

CHAPTER VI.

A Visit to Garden Street.

"I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are within."

COLERIDGE.

MR. HARDY lifted in his arms the insensible body of his wife, and laid it upon the bed. He was startled, pained, and alarmed, as well he might be; but not to the extent most readers would imagine. Of a very equable temperament, he was never greatly moved by any sudden occurrences, no matter what their character; and rarely was the equilibrium of his mind disturbed.

In the present case, instead of calling Mr. and Mrs. Enfield, he began chafing the hands and arms of his insensible wife, sprinkling her face with water, and using such other restorative means as occurred to him. Nearly ten minutes were spent in these efforts, before the smallest sign of life appeared; and then the returning pulse beat very feebly under the pressure of his searching fingers.

The father and mother were now summoned. To them the condition of their child was appalling. Never since her earliest childhood had they seen her in such a state; for never, even in severe illness and its consequent debility, had the life-forces of her being been for a moment suspended. Their eager inquiries elicited no satisfactory reply from Mr. Hardy. The utmost they could learn from him was, that while they were conversing, he noticed an unusual pallor in her face, and that soon after, her eyes closed, and she fell forward into his arms. It was, doubtless, a "mere fainting fit," he said; and he urged the parents not to feel needless alarm.

There was far less of comfort, far less of hope, in his almost calmly spoken words, than the young man supposed. That he should appear so little disturbed under the circumstances, surprised Mr. and Mrs. Enfield, and awakened vague suspicions in their minds.

"Oh! run for the doctor! quickly! quickly!" exclaimed the mother, as soon as the first bewilderment passed away, and she could think at all.

"Don't be frightened," said Mr. Hardy. "It will scarcely be necessary to call in the doctor, for she is gradually recovering. It is only a fainting fit. See, her eyelids are quivering, and there is a motion in her lips and hands. It will be over in a few moments. Do not be alarmed"

As he spoke, a low, sad murmur breathed through her lips; it had the vagueness of a dreamy sound.

"Jane! Jane! Dear child!" The lips of the mother almost touched the ear of her daughter; and her tones were eager, and trembling with love and pity. Only the sad moaning sound was repeated; but it was less vague, and more fraught with a living anguish.

"Jane, dear! My daughter! Speak, if you hear me." It was the father who now addressed her.

The sound of his voice seemed to penetrate the shut door of her spirit. Her eyes slowly opened; for a moment or two she looked from face to face of the anxious group bending over her, and then throwing her arms around her father's neck, sobbed out—

"Father! father! Oh, father!"

"My dear, precious child! what ails you?"

"Jane! Dear love!" The mother bent close to her, and kissed her tenderly.

"You are better now," said Mr. Hardy, laying his hand upon her damp forehead, and smoothing back the hair which had fallen over its polished surface. He spoke in an even voice. Mr. Enfield was struck with the apparent want of emotion in the young husband, under circumstances so deeply distressing to himself. Jane did not seem to notice his presence.

Gradually life and consciousness were restored; but not to the full extent. To the many questions of her parents, touching the cause of her sudden illness, Jane gave no reply. After the first startled recognitions of those who were standing around, her mind seemed to relapse into a torpid, semi-conscious state. Her countenance remained very pale; and its whole expression was that of intense mental suffering.

Mr. and Mrs. Enfield were distressed beyond measure; and it is but justice to say of Mr. Hardy, that he was deeply troubled. His state of feeling, and his thoughts on the subject, were, however, widely different from theirs. He viewed the case before him from a stand-point of his own; and, painful as the trial was, he resolved not to recede a single step from the position he had assumed. It was, as he conceived, only a simple struggle for the mastery; and he even went so far in his conclusions as to assume, that baffled self-will had quite as much to do with his wife's present condition, as any other feeling! In this he was sincere. But he was not the man to yield in any struggle for right or predominance. Let the contest be long or short, he was determined to maintain his ground to the end.

"I did not expect this," he said to himself, as he left the house on seeing Jane well nigh recovered from her fainting fit, and took his way to

his office. "I did not expect this of her,—one who, in all her maidenly intercourse, has been so gentle, so loving, so ready to concede, so yielding in all that concerned herself. Ah! woman! woman! thou art indeed a riddle most difficult of solution! How soon have the roses, dropped from thy gentle hands, become thorns in my path!"

When Mr. Hardy returned at dinner-time, he found his wife entirely recovered. She was alone in her room, and received him with a flitting smile on her still pale face. He kissed her as he sat down by her side; and taking her hand in his, inquired tenderly as to her health.

"Oh, I am very well now," she replied, endeavouring to speak cheerfully, and to wear a pleasant smile. The smile and tone, however, were but a mockery. Mr. Hardy tried to converse with her on subjects in which, heretofore, both of them had been interested, but he failed to awaken any warm response. This did not soften his feelings; for he called that woman's perverseness, which was simply a resultant condition of mind, and impossible for her to cast off. He even permitted himself to charge her in his thoughts, with acting a part in order to gain him over to her will. This idea hardened him towards her, and widened the breach between them.

In the evening the state of things was but

slightly improved. Jane did not come down to the tea-table, and Mr. and Mrs. Enfield were too much depressed in spirits to enter into anything more than a mere monosyllabic conversation with Mr Hardy, who, whatever was the true state of his feelings, maintained a bland, affable deportment.

To some extent, during the evening, the young wife was able, by a strongly self-compelling effort, to assume a more cheerful aspect towards her husband, which he regarded as a favourable omen. How little of what was in her heart could he understand! Did it suggest the thought that he might make some concession? No! There was rather a feeling of exultation at the signs of victory; and there was the stirring of a meaner purpose to make the submission still more complete than at first designed.

Longer than the next morning he could not wait, before again proposing to go and look at the house in Garden-Street. He saw the paling of his wife's face, the quiver of her lip, the sudden catching of her breath, that followed his words: but these did not shake him in his purpose, nor cause him to hesitate. They only made him the more resolute to move onward. He had hoped, that, after passing through the convulsive struggles of the previous day, conscious weakness would induce her to yield. That she manifested surprise and pain at the renewal of his proposition,

satisfied him that there had been a mutual error both having regarded the victory as won.

"Will you go with me this morning, Jane?" he said firmly.

"If you desire it," was faintly answered.

"Certainly, I desire it." Mr. Hardy spoke firmly, and in a rebuking tone.

"I shall be ready in a few moments." And Jane turned to the wardrobe to get her shawl. He did not notice that she staggered in her gait, as she crossed the room.

"You will find me in the library," said he, leaving the room. The instant he closed the door, his wife stood still, and clasping her hands across her bosom, lifted her eyes upwards, saying with an even, repressed voice—

"O Lord, give me strength and endurance Make me a true, good wife. Teach me the way of duty. Guide my wandering feet. O Lord, help me! for I am weaker than the bruised reed."

Then, with a firmer step, she moved about the room, and with quicker movements made preparation to go with her husband.

"I saw the owner of the house yesterday," said Mr. Hardy, as they left the street-door, "and he says that several persons are desirous to rent it, and that we shall have to decide the matter to-day. I told him I thought there was no doubt of your taking the house."

He waited for a response, but none was made. The remark was intended to impress his wife with the fact, that he was still entirely in earnest; and such was the effect, for she remembered that it was while she had been lying sick in bed, that he was coldly prosecuting the object which he sought to obtain, even at the expense of trampling on her already crushed feelings. A low shudder went quivering along every nerve at this new proof of his utter disregard of her wishes.

"Lord, help me!" From away down in her suffering spirit arose this almost despairing cry. Very weak she felt; her own strength was almost gone. She must fall by the way, unless Heaven sent the power to bear up and move on.

Her silence, as little understood as any state of mind had been during this brief but unhappy contest, was set down to an unsubdued spirit, that yet hoped to compass its own will.

"It is of no use," he said, "my pretty one!" speaking to himself, in a light vein. "These weapons of warfare strike against polished armour. I can be as insensible as iron when I choose. And so the quicker you get over all these airs, the better it will be for yourself."

The house in Garden Street was a handsome edifice; much handsomer than that in which Mr. and Mrs. Enfield were living. The neighbourhood was pleasant and desirable. Indeed, in most

respects the choice was good. All this Jane saw at a glance; and yet, as she entered the spacious doorway, and passed into the elegantly-finished parlours, she felt that here was the burial-place of all her happiness. A dead coldness, like the atmosphere of a tomb, struck chillingly on her spirit.

To the All-seeing One only was it known how, with the utmost strength of her soul, she struggled to assume a cheerful and interested manner, and to meet with a wife-like acceptance the earnestly-spoken commendations lavished by her husband upon the new home into which he purposed removing her.

"Don't you think these parlours beautiful?" he asked with animation.

"Very," was replied. Jane wished to say more; but she was no actress. She could not veil her feelings with her voice; and she feared that the attempted utterance of words would only betray her state of mind too fully.

Mr. Hardy was disappointed at the brief response, as well as chafed by the still unbroken, persevering wilfulness of his wife.

They passed into the large garden filled with choicest shrubbery, and adorned with a tasteful summer-house.

"Is not this charming! I have seen nothing like it in the whole city," said Mr. Hardy.

"It is very beautiful," replied Mrs. Hardy in an absent way. In truth, her eyes had scarcely taken in the form of these external things; for, just at the moment, arose before the eyes of her spirit that dreadful, never-to-be-obliterated scene of the previous morning; and she seemed again to be looking appalled into the changed and terrible face of her husband, which, like that of another Medusa, was changing her into stone.

Mr. Hardy bit his lips to repress an impatient, rebuking word. With an unusual effort he kept silent.

From the garden they went into the upper rooms, both speechless—both embarrassed; and one in a state bordering upon angry excitement. Two handsome apartments, opening into each other by folding-doors, and finished with everything convenient and appropriate, were on the second floor, and, as they stepped into them, Mr. Hardy said—

"How do you like these, Jane?"

From the moment the young wife's feet crossed the threshold of this house, a chill fell upon her spirit, as if the wings of death had thrown their cold shadows over her; and every advancing step she had taken, seemed like going farther and farther into the dusky chambers of an Egyptian tomb.

She tried to answer her husband's question—

tried to frame approving words in her mind—tried to master her feelings so as to speak with apparent smiling cheerfulness. But all was vain. And so she remained silent under the pressure of emotions it was impossible to throw off.

"Why don't you speak, Jane?" Mr. Hardy's impatient feelings overleaped his self-control. "Surely, all this makes some impression upon your mind, favourable or unfavourable! I am at least entitled to a response."

He had turned upon her suddenly, and was gazing sternly into her sad face. She met his fiery eyes with a startled look.

"Can't you say whether you like the house or not?"

Two or three times Jane attempted to answer; but her tongue clove, literally, to her mouth. Sternly her husband continued to gaze upon her, the angry spirit in his eyes smiting her with terrible anguish.

"It is of no use, Jane, thus to set yourself up against my wishes," said he, speaking very firmly, yet under greater self-control. "I understand more than half of this to be mere acting; and the other half the painful struggles of conscious weakness. Under the law of our marriage—and you solemnly vowed before Heaven to keep that law—it is my prerogative to decide all questions on which difference exists. We have differed here,

and my decision you know. You wrong me, therefore, by this fruitless opposition; and you create for your own mind a world of wretchedness. Surely, a man may be pardoned for desiring a home for himself; and that wife is greatly to blame who opposes her husband in this reasonable desire, particularly when she sees that he has set his heart upon it, and cannot be turned aside from his purpose!"

"Oh, John! John!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardy, bursting into tears,—"how greatly you misunderstand me!—how sadly you wrong me!" And she leaned her face upon his shoulder, and for some moments wept bitterly.

Mr. Hardy drew his arm around her, and pressed her to his side; but there was no heart-thrill conveyed by the pressure, for no heart was in the act. As the outburst of feelings died away, he said—

"I should be sorry to misunderstand or wrong you, Jane. In this respect, it is my effort to be blameless in the sight of Heaven towards all men. Just, I have ever sought to be."

Jane could speak no farther. A mere servile humiliation of herself at his feet was impossible, and this seemed to her the only alternative offered. There were necessities in her being that could not be wholly abrogated.

"Will you answer me one question, clearly

and firmly?" said Mr. Hardy, with a resolute tone of voice, stepping a little apart, as he spoke.

"Certainly." There was a calmer utterance of the word than he had expected to hear.

"Shall we take this house? Say yes, or no."

"Yes, take it by all means," she answered, speaking evenly, but not lifting her eyes from the floor.

"Very well. That is settled. So far we understand each other. I will see the owner, and make the contract with him this morning. And now, for the matter of furnishing; that must be considered next. If you have any choice as to the cabinet-maker and upholsterer, I shall be glad to consult your wishes in this respect. Indeed, if you and your excellent mother will undertake the whole business of furnishing every part of the house, I shall be gratified. What say you?"

"If mother consents, as I have no doubt she will, I shall cheerfully consent to the arrangement."

This was almost too coldly—too mechanically—said, to suit Mr. Hardy. There was neither warmth nor will enough in it.

A moment or two he stood, hesitating whether to make any farther remark. He then said—

"Come; there is more of the house yet to be seen." Mrs. Hardy moved away with him, exhibiting a degree of interest not manifested before

The fact was, her feelings had suddenly congealed, giving an exterior placidity, and a smooth, glassy surface, which would coldly mirror back whatever image was presented. The ice, indeed, was very, very thin. But enough, that the waters were frozen, and to such a depth as would secure their remaining for a while undisturbed by the lighter airs which swept over them.

"I am glad you like the house," said Mr. Hardy, as on closing their examination they started homeward. The remark was made in a voice that indicated satisfaction, and showed that he was deceived as to the real state of his wife's mind. "How soon shall we make arrangements for selecting the furniture?"

"I see no reason for delay in the matter," replied Mrs. Hardy.

"Nor I! And now, Jane, will you, assisted by your mother, undertake this work, and relieve me from all care on the subject? We are very busy at the office, and my time and thoughts are both fully occupied."

"If you desire it, and can trust to our taste in the selection," was the answer.

"Oh! I'll willingly leave the whole of that matter to you; making, however, one exception—everything must be handsome, and of the best quality. It is always cheapest to buy good furniture, and of the most recent patterns. It lasts

ronger, and does not so soon go out of fashion. Don't you agree with me in this respect?"

"Yes; I think you are right; only, there must be a limit as to price. It is possible that, in the selection, we might be tempted to exceed the sum you can afford to appropriate for the purpose. This is my only fear."

"You need not be alarmed about that. I wish to furnish handsomely, and you are at liberty to consult your taste in everything. Let elegance, not cheapness, be your guide."

Mr. Hardy, who was a man of but feeble perceptive powers, was again deceived as to the true state of his wife's feelings. He was weak enough to suppose that she had yielded in the contest, and was now submitting herself dutifully, and in a returning spirit of cheerfulness, the result of right purposes in the right direction. Pleasantly, and almost volubly, he talked of the future, and how delightful it would be when they could close the doors and windows of their own home at eventide, and shut out the world. How far was it from his thoughts, that every word he uttered struck the icy exterior of his wife's feelings, and glanced off without making the feeblest impression! How little did he imagine, that her seemingly pleased responses were only from the lips outward, and that, in the deep places of her soul, were agitation and opposition as profound as the

life-sources of her being! He did not for an instant dream that a permanent change had passed over the surface of her feelings, and that, by gaining his purposes in the way in which he had gained them, he *had lost his wife!* that all the sweet, loving, gentle, celestial graces of her woman's nature, which had lured him by their heavenly attractions, had faded from the changed exterior, and retired for safety and life, far up into the interior mansions of her spirit, there to hide themselves until mortal should put on immortality.

Ah! what an error had been committed! What a wrong done! The selfish, self-willed young husband did not understand the instrument upon which he sought to play; and in his bold self-sufficiency, dashed his hand in among the delicate strings, first producing discord, and then shivering them to pieces.

CHAPTER VII

The New Home.

"No more can faith or candour move,—
But such ingenuous deeds of love
Which reason could applaud,
Now, smiling o'er her dark distress,
Fancy malignant strives to dress
Like injury and fraud."—AKENSIDE.

THE house was taken, the furniture purchased, and the new home prepared for the young bride and her husband. Taste, comfort, and elegance were visible everywhere. With an appearance of interest that altogether deceived Mr. Hardy, and to some extent her parents, Jane had entered into the business of selecting and arranging the furniture. For the space of three or four weeks, nearly her whole time was taken up in this work; while the occupation of her thoughts in what she was doing in some degree lifted her above the darkness that brooded over her spirit, and gave to her manner a cheerfulness that was but a mockery of her real state.

Then came the formal change from the old to the new home. To her, it was like the going forth of the dove from the ark. Before and around her—everywhere within the range of her keenly searching vision—stretched only a dreary waste of troubled waters, above which not even the stony peak of an Ararat was visible. But she went from the warm, loving atmosphere of the old home into the new one, and felt the chilling air strike coldly upon her heart, without a visible tear or a faltering footstep. The pressure on her feelings was so great, that a sunny countenance was impossible. She had intended to appear cheerful and interested; to manifest not even a shade of reluctance; to hide the troubled aspect of her spirit from every one. Alas! this was impossible. She had no skill in dissembling. She knew that the searching eyes of her husband were upon her, watching every changing hue in her countenance; and she felt that he saw deeper than the surface.

It was in the forenoon of a fair autumn-day that Mrs. Hardy, accompanied by her mother and her husband, stepped into a carriage, by which they were conveyed to the elegant habitation that was to be the bride's new home. "I ought to be a happy wife." These were the mental words of Mrs. Hardy, as the carriage moved away from her father's house. Yet even as she said

this, she shrunk back in the carriage, and drew her veil over her face, lest the tears that it seemed impossible to restrain, should suddenly gush from her eyes. Mr. Hardy noticed the movement, and understood it as indicating a pained and reluctant state of feeling.

Arrived at Garden Street, Mr. Hardy remained only a short time. Business called him elsewhere.

"I leave my young housekeeper to take her first lessons under your instructions," he said with a smile, and in a pleasant tone, to Mrs. Enfield. "She is timid, and fearful that she will not do well; but I am ready to trust all in her hands. Don't you think we ought to be very happy here?" And he glanced around upon the elegant adornments of the room in which they stood.

"Happiness comes always from within," replied Mrs. Enfield in a low, thoughtful voice. "Yes," she added, after an almost imperceptible pause, "you ought to be very happy here; and may Heaven grant you that great blessing."

"Nothing shall be wanting, which it is in my power to give," said Mr. Hardy, as he looked towards his young wife.

She was standing with her eyes upon the floor, and neither looked up nor responded.

"Good morning!" Mr. Hardy spoke cheerfully. "Business first—pleasure afterwards. I must away:" and he moved across the room. "But

stay," he added, pausing at the door. "I must book myself in regard to the new household arrangements. At what hour shall we dine?"

"What time will suit you?" asked Mrs. Hardy.

"Say two o'clock?"

"Yes."

"Very well, let it be two. You will see me at the door when the clock strikes."

At two Mr. Hardy returned, and found his wife alone, her mother having gone back to attend to the duties of her own household. She met him with tender looks and loving words; but there was a suffering expression on her face, and there were signs of weeping about her eyes, which worried the young husband. "Why should she look sad? Why should she weep?" It was "unreasonable!" He instantly felt cold towards her; and she, conscious of this repulsion, lost her self-control and burst into tears. She was standing before him, and looking into his face, when thus overpowered by her feelings.

Leaning her face down upon his shoulder, she sobbed almost hysterically.

Mr. Hardy did not speak a soothing word, nor so much as draw his arm around her, but stood silent and immovable as stone, until the gush of feeling had subsided. He then said, in no kind voice—

"Jane, I am confounded at this persevering

opposition on your part. None but a self-willed, unreasonable woman could make any objection to becoming the mistress of a home like this."

"I make no objection," she answered, lifting her face, and looking at him through tears that were not yet stayed.

"Every act, every look, every thought is an objection," said Mr. Hardy, with strong emphasis on his words.

"You do not understand me, John."

"And fear that I never shall," was replied with no softening of voice or manner. "I thought you understood, in assuming a wife's relations, what were a wife's duties. But I have spoken to you plainly on the subject before, and I need not repeat my words now. You know my sentiments on this point."

"Forgive me in what I have done wrong," said Mrs. Hardy, meekly. "It is in my heart to be all God requires of me in this my new and holy relation. But I am a weak, erring, blind creature. Have patience with me, John! Do not bear down too hard upon me, lest you break what you seek to bend."

"Bear down upon you, Jane! I cannot understand such language! What is your meaning? How have I borne down upon you? In what have I been selfish, exacting, or unreasonable? Was it strange that, in taking a wife, I should

desire a home? No! But it *was* strange that the wife I selected from the circle of maidens should, for an instant, think of holding me back from that most coveted blessing. Yes, that is the strange feature in the case. Bear down too hard upon you! Is it possible that I am so soon transformed in your eyes into a domestic tyrant?"

The words of this sentence were, at first, as painful blows on the young wife's heart; but ere it was closed they rebounded from the hardened surface, leaving scarcely an impression behind. She had felt a reviving tenderness for him, as her appeal indicated; and if he had then folded her lovingly in his arms; if he had then suffered right thoughts to guide him to a perception of her true state; if he had then resolved to seek her happiness rather than his own ends, the dark clouds already overhanging their household would have been scattered, and the bright sunshine filled every chamber. But there was no such movement in his cold, selfish nature. A little while his wife stood near him, with her eyes no longer wet with tears,—her cheeks no longer flushed with feeling,—and then moved back slowly, increasing the distance between them, until she reached the opposite side of the room. She then turned her face from him, and stood still.

"Jane!" Mr. Hardy spoke sternly.

Slowly she turned round, and in so doing showed

a face as colourless as marble, and eyes that had a stony aspect.

"Jane! do you hear me?"

There seemed not even an attempt to reply.

"What am I to understand by this?" The voice was neither so stern, nor so imperative.

A feeble flushing of the cheeks, a slight glancing of the eyes, a scarcely perceptible motion of the lips, showed that his words had reawakened her to the consciousness of what was passing.

"Is this the right beginning for us? Oh, Jane! how little did I dream that such a trial as this was in store for me, when, with a heart full of joyful anticipations, I asked you to become my wedded wife."

The hue of death again settled over the countenance of Mrs. Hardy, and, staggering forward, she fell upon the sofa—not this time in a state of insensibility, but of utter physical prostration.

Shall we say it? Yes, even at the risk of having the narrative doubted, as involving an impossibility; —not a single wave of pity moved over the surface of her husband's feelings! He did not spring forward to lift her up tenderly; he showed no sign of alarm; he merely stood where he was, and looked on coldly! It was, in his eyes, only acting; or, if there was real emotion at the bottom, disappointed self-will was its exciting impulse. No; he had no pity; no sympathy. His cool, well-

balanced mind was not disturbed by any feeling of commiseration for his wife. He was only offended by her pertinacity. A moment he looked sternly upon her form as it lay crouching upon the sofa, with the face hidden; and then calmly left the room, and went up stairs with a measured tread.

Ten minutes afterwards, the ringing of a bell was heard. It was the announcement that dinner was on the table. Mr. Hardy went to the dining-room without seeking his wife. He was a little surprised to find her there, giving some brief directions to the servant. Her manner was composed, and her voice steady; but her face was almost hueless. She quietly took her position at the table, and served her husband to the various dishes. Upon her own plate, she took only one or two mouthfuls, and, though she made a feint of eating, scarcely anything passed her lips.

Thus was their first meal in their own home eaten in silence, and under painful embarrassment on both sides. It was ominous of dark and evil days to come. Rising from the table at its close, Mr. Hardy, without speaking, left the dining-room. His wife, still seated, turned her ear, and listened to his footsteps as he moved along the passages. That she was not prepared for the jar of the street-door, was evident from the start she gave, as the sound struck upon her ear. She sat very still for a few moments, and then rising, went up to her

own room, shut the door, and locked it. Crossing her hands, and laying them tightly upon her bosom, she lifted her eyes upwards, and offered a silent prayer. But the anguish of her spirit was not removed. While the arrow rankled in her heart, there could be no cessation of pain.

After a brief, unavailing struggle with her feelings, Mrs. Hardy, weak in body as in spirit, laid herself upon her bed, and with shut eyes, in a state of half-conscious misery, passed the hours until evening. A little before her husband's return, she aroused herself, and removing as far as possible, all traces of suffering from her countenance, met him with an air so pleasant and cheerful, that he was surprised and gratified. He had expected a very different reception. Just as far as pride and self-will would let him go, did he seek to conciliate her feelings, and to yield to what he deemed her wishes. Purposely he avoided all allusion to their home and to household matters, lest he should touch a discordant string. The result well repaid him for this small measure of self-control. Something of the former light came back into her eyes; something of the old warmth to her cheeks, and the wonted music to her voice. A few friends called after tea, and the evening passed cheerfully away. Mrs. Hardy's voice had been well trained, and she sang with uncommon sweetness. On this occasion, she almost surpassed

herself, and her husband listened to her voice and her praises with a glow of pride.

"How happy we *might* be!" he sighed faintly, as the thought crossed his mind. "Beautiful—accomplished—possessing every external grace"—so his thoughts ran on.—"Ah, if there were only submission and self-denial! Alas! alas! who could have dreamed that one so gentle, so unobtrusive, so apparently unselfish, had so strong a will and such endurance?"

"What a little paradise you have!" said one fair friend to the bride.

"If you are not happy here, there is no happiness to be found on earth," said another.

Mr. Hardy stood by when these remarks were made, and looked steadily into the face of his wife to see the effect. But he could perceive no change in its expression.

"How perfectly she can act!" thought he.

Blind, ungenerous man! Perversely bent on misinterpretation! That thought warped his feelings again, and opened his mind to the influx of subtle accusations.

The sudden depression that followed the breaking up of a company before whom she had really been acting a part, only confirmed Mr. Hardy in the idea that his wife was assuming a great deal more than she felt, in order to gain her purposes He did not permit himself to utter the thoughts

that were in his mind, for he wished to avoid a scene; but his manner became icy cold as he perceived a change in his wife's deportment.

And so there rested darkness and silence upon their spirits, as well as darkness and silence upon the face of nature. Very ominous of dark days to come, was this termination of their first day's life in their new home. Alas! alas! for all who, like them, are unequally yoked together!

CHAPTER VIII.

Clouds and Sun-gleams.

. . . . . "High winds worse within
Began to rise; high passions, anger, hate,
Mistrust, suspicion, discord; and shook sore
Their inward state of mind, calm region once
And full of peace, now tost and turbulent.
* * * * *
Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
And of their vain contest appear'd no end."—MILTON.

THROUGH many wakeful hours of the night that followed this first day of trial in their new home, did Mrs. Hardy lie and ponder the question of *duty*. Ah! if it had been the question of *love*—nothing would have been easier than the solution!

Morning found her with the problem yet unsolved. Pale cheeks, weary eyes, joyless countenance, silent lips! Across the breakfast table John Hardy looked, and saw but these! Did they move him with pity? Did loving sympathy, or tender emotion, awaken in his heart? No! He saw only the unlovely type of a yet unconquered pride; and anger, not love, stirred in his bosom.

Even while the ears of his sad young wife were listening for words of comfort, he was meditating sharp reproof. When she saw his lips part, and heard the first murmur of his voice, after a long silence, her heart leaped up with an eager impulse.

"I bargained for sunshine, not cloud and tempest." A low shudder went electrically through every fibre of her soul. The expectant heart sunk down like lead in her bosom. But her countenance revealed scarcely anything below the surface. Calmly—so it seemed to her husband—looked her spirit forth. Mr. Hardy was irritated.

"A contract is a contract;"—he spoke with cold severity;—"and among men, such things cannot be violated without loss of honour."

Still the eyes of his wife looked out calmly upon him;—still her countenance remained impassive. There was no motion about her lips;—no indication of feeling. His words seemed as if flung back upon him mockingly.

"I am tired of all this, Jane," he said, after waiting for some response. "Clouds and tempests were never to my mind. I like clear skies and sunshine."

Mr. Hardy had seen, more than once in his lifetime, blows given with such stunning force that the body receiving them was deprived, for a brief period, of even respiration. But it never once occurred to him, that the heavy blows his

strong arm was inflicting upon a weak, sensitive woman, were in as full a measure depriving her spirit of even the power to evince a sign of suffering.

"Heaven help us both, if life is to go on after this fashion!" he exclaimed, rising from the table. "It is well said, that woman is a mystery!" He stood and gazed down upon his wife, who sat, with drooping eyelids, and unchanging expression. She saw not the aspect of his countenance with her natural eyes, but all its terrible sternness was mirrored to the eyes of her spirit with blasting distinctness.

"Jane! will you speak to me?"

As quickly as the glancing of a thought were the eyes of Mrs. Hardy raised to the face of her husband. A few moments they looked at each other steadily.

"Will you answer me, Jane?"

"I will. Say on." The evenness of her tone a little surprised Mr. Hardy.

"Do you think that all this is loving and right?"

"To what do you refer?"

Still the voice was very calm.

"To your purpose to thwart my desires; to make the home I had pictured in the future as a paradise, a darker, colder, and more wretched place than the dreary world, into which our first parents went when thrust from Eden."

"I have no such purpose, Mr. Hardy; and God is my witness that I speak the truth. As your wife, I will strive earnestly, in the sight of Heaven, to do my whole duty. This I have already pledged you; and I now renew the pledge. If strength fail me—if the burden be too heavy—if I fall by the way—the weakness must be forgiven for its own sake. But if I can bear up, I will. Only have patience with me, John! Don't lay your hand too heavily upon me in the beginning. I trust to be stronger and more enduring by and by."

There was no trembling or failing of the voice: no drooping of the steady eye; no sign of wavering, as she said these words.

"You speak as if I were a tyrant, and you a slave!" said Mr. Hardy, who was angered rather than softened by her words. Pride, not tenderness and sympathy, was aroused.

Mrs. Hardy did feel the quick rising of an indignant impulse at the ungenerous blow, and under its influence, she answered—

"I have, at least, made one painful discovery."

"What?"

"That, between the lover and the husband, there is as wide a difference as between Cancer and Capricorn."

"Jane!" Mr. Hardy's brow contracted, and he looked wrathfully upon the young creature he had wooed with loving words from the warm

home-nest, where only love had been the aliment of her soul; looked wrathfully upon his young wife, who, never from childhood up to the ripe years of maidenhood, had gazed into angry eyes that burned against her.

But she quailed not. With her, the sharper agony was over. The truth had come, ere this, in all its hard, strong, crushing power; and now the life-lesson she had to learn was endurance.

"I have said it, John." She spoke low, sadly, yet not with apparent weakness. "Perhaps, like something you have uttered, it were better if the thought had died in silence. But spoken thoughts can no longer be hidden secrets. You have the painful conclusion to which my heart has been driven; and it may be well that it is so."

Mr. Hardy was confused and silenced, not only by the firm demeanour, but by the words of his wife, which sounded strangely to his ears. That she could intimate anything wrong or unreasonable on his part confounded him. What had he done more than to act upon the defensive? Had not all the trouble originated with her? And now to be charged back, by implication, with any wrong treatment, was, in his mind, but adding insult to injury. He saw that a new spirit—one of retaliation—had been aroused in his wife; and, just then, he did not care to drive it into further action. So, after returning for a few

moments longer her calm, unvarying look, he left the room, and went forth, without a parting word, to his daily business.

Very uncomfortable did he feel—nay, more, he was positively unhappy. But he took no blame to himself. Pride gave no place to self-accusation. Calmly he reviewed the subject of his marital relations; and the review only strengthened the first conclusion of his mind. He had asked nothing that was not perfectly natural. "In taking a wife," he said to himself, "does not every man look to the establishment of a home? Who could imagine that, on this question, any division were possible? Who could dream that a wife would make objections? Was I to yield here? To give up the dearest wish of my heart? No! All the manhood in me says, No! I cannot, I must not, I will not be driven aside! Tears, vapours, sharp words, impenetrable silence, none of these can move me! I will be granite to all opposing forces. Yes, I will be the ruler of my own household. My judgment shall be law!"

Again, as thought went on reviewing his unhappy relations, and memory recalled words and incidents, he said—"The unkindest cut of all! the husband and the lover, Cancer and Capricorn! I shall never forget that, were I to number Methuselah's years. What can she mean by such conduct? But this assumption of injured inno-

cence will avail nothing. I am on her track, and though she double upon me like the panting hare again and again, I will never yield the pursuit. John Hardy is always right with himself; and, right with himself, he cannot be wrong towards others. I have asked nothing unreasonable—have set no foot, in trespass, on her prerogative—have sailed under no false colours."

And thus he fortified himself, looking only on one side of the question, and seeing only that aspect of the case which flattered his pride and encouraged his self-will.

"I can hold out as long as she can:"—so he continued talking with himself, as thought, ever and anon, turned from business-concerns to the matter nearest his heart. "It is but a question of time; yet, of all time, if needs be. I can and will hold out to the end—even to the end of life! When John Hardy is right, he never yields even the fraction of a hair. If he were to yield, he would cease to be John Hardy!"

And thus, through all the hours that intervened until his return home, did the ungenerous young husband continue to write bitter things against his wife, and to fortify himself in opposition. When he laid his hand upon the door-knob, and entered, with a firm step, at dinner-time, his head was erect, his countenance composed, his blue eyes calm even to severity. His wife met him

with smiles and loving words; and, for a little while, he was deceived into the belief that they were outward signs of real feeling, and accepted them as such. At once, the coldness of his exterior gave way; light beamed from his countenance, his tones were gentle, and his words kind.

"How much better this than clouds!" he said, as they sat together on one of the sofas. He had taken her hand, and was holding it tightly in his own. "O Jane! shall we not always have light in our dwelling?"

Mrs. Hardy did not answer, but her husband felt her hand thrill in his clasp, as if some strong emotion had suddenly been awakened in her heart; and, at the same time, he was conscious of a perceptible shrinking away from him. Instantly his feelings changed, and the accusing spirit reentered his heart. There was a dead silence for the space of several minutes. Mrs. Hardy's hand still lay in that of her husband, but it lay there passively, neither giving nor receiving the slightest pressure. Then it was slowly withdrawn, and with the motion a sigh broke on the still air —a low faint sigh, yet painfully distinct to the ears of Mr. Hardy.

"I cannot breathe an atmosphere like this!" he exclaimed, suddenly, starting to his feet. "I shall die of suffocation."

And leaving the room with a firm step, he took

up his hat, and before Mrs. Hardy had time to imagine his purpose, had left the house. As he shut the street-door, the bell rung for dinner.

It was some minutes before Mrs. Hardy had strength to rise from the sofa, so stunned was she by this unexpected conduct on the part of her husband. A second time the dinner-bell rung; and then, for appearance' sake, she forced herself to walk as far as the dining-room, where the servant stood waiting.

"Mr. Hardy has gone out," she said, in as firm a voice as it was possible for her to assume; "and I do not know how soon he will return;—perhaps not till evening. I am not very well, and do not wish for anything; so, you can remove the dishes from the table. If Mr. Hardy comes back, you can replace them."

It did not escape the servant's observation, that his mistress's face was pallid, and her voice husky. He had his own thoughts on the subject, which he did not fail to express on returning to the kitchen.

"I have begun; and I shall go through, cost what it may!" said Mr. Hardy to himself, as he sat down in a state of remarkable calmness, to eat the dinner he had ordered at a club-house. "The fiercer the tempest, the sooner it is over. If gentle measures avail not, harsher ones must be adopted. There is one thing certain,—I can hold

out as long as Mrs. Hardy, who will find, before she has done with this business, that, in setting up her will against mine, she has reckoned without her host When John Hardy knows that he is right, John Hardy never yields."

Excellent John Hardy! In his own eyes a pattern man!

From the dining-room Mrs. Hardy went up, with faltering steps, to her own room, where, after shutting and locking the door, she sank upon her knees, and lifting her tearless eyes upwards toward heaven, prayed thus,—with an utterance despairing, rather than hopeful:—

"O Lord! give me light, patience, strength! Show me the true path, and help me to walk in it, even though sharp stones cut my feet at every step. O Lord! pity and help me! I am lost in a trackless desert; and the darkness of old Egypt is around me. I have no wisdom of my own to guide—no light in my heart to show me the way. O Lord! pity and help me!"

And thus she prayed for a long time, writhing in her agony. But no light came as yet; no strength was given. The heaven seemed as brass to her petitions.

From her knees she arose at length, and in her weakness and despair threw herself across the bed.

How long she had lain thus, when there came a low rap at her door, she knew not, for suffering

brought a partial paralysis of feeling and suspension of thought. She started up and spoke.

"Jane!" was the response.

It was her mother's voice. The door was opened, and Mrs. Enfield came in. There was not time for the daughter to school her exterior, and the forced smile with which she greeted her mother, revealed more of suffering than pleasure. Tenderly was she enfolded in the maternal arms, and fondly were love's kisses laid upon her lips and cheeks.

"Are you not well, dear?" asked Mrs. Enfield with concern.

"Not very well. My head aches," was the answer. "I have been lying down since dinner time; and must have slept. What time is it?"

"After four."

"Then I *have* been sleeping. How is father?"

"Quite well. He wants you and John to come down this evening."

"Does he? Tell him that if Mr. Hardy has no other engagement, we will come. Dear father! So loving, so gentle, so good! Since our brief separation, tears come into my eyes whenever I think of him. If all men were like him, what a happy world this would be! But"—after a pause—"all cannot be like him; for he is best of all."

"How is John?" Mrs. Enfield inquired, without seeming to notice or to understand the remarks made by her daughter.

"He is well," was the simple reply.

"Delighted, I suppose, with the new home upon which his heart was set. I'm a little afraid, Jane, that we somewhat erred in making even the smallest objections to his wishes in this respect,—seeing, as we now do, how the attractions of a home were magnified in his eyes. He showed, perhaps, a little too great eagerness in the matter; but, if we put ourselves in his place, we shall not be so greatly surprised that it was so. Here centred, for him, the highest ideal of life; and he was disturbed at anything which came in between himself and the full realization of his wishes. We must have patience with him, and make many allowances. All men are not like your father, Jane."

Mrs. Hardy only responded with a sigh. But she was gaining temporary power, to hide the weakness of a crushed and suffering heart.

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Enfield, "one of the greatest errors we commit, and one from which the awakening is most painful, is the error of imputing virtues in perfection to those we love: But weakness and imperfection are inherent in all that is human. Even the best men and women that live, are only withheld from evil by the power of Divine love."

"I shall grow wiser, as I grow older, and gain more experience, dear mother," replied Jane;

" wiser in seeing duty, and stronger to bear suffering."

" Life is not all a day of golden sunshine," said Mrs. Enfield. " And it is well for us, perhaps, that it is not so. We might become too deeply in love with this world, and find, in its mere natural and fleeting life, too intense an enjoyment."

Mrs. Hardy sighed again, but did not answer.

" You must not expect too much of John," resumed the mother cautiously. " He is all right at heart, and loves you truly. Few men have such high moral purposes;—few, such noble aims. All the groundwork of his character is good. In the first starting there may be a little jarring in the machinery of your lives, ere they can move together in harmony; and, for a season, there may be a painful want of accordant action. But all will run smoothly in good time."

" I will believe it, dear mother!" said Jane, in a voice, the low quiver of which struck a pang to the heart of Mrs. Enfield. " Time is the great restorer of harmonies."

" It is, my child; and also the great reconciler. Our path of life leads upwards, as well as onwards. At every step we rise a little higher, and our vision gains an ampler circle. What is but dimly perceived to-day stands out to-morrow clearly shaped, and seen in relation to all that surrounds it. Objects, now so much in shadow that they

seem only hideous deformities, may, in a little while, as we ascend and get a sunnier aspect, appear to us, as they really are, forms of truest beauty."

Mrs. Enfield paused; but her daughter made no response to the sentiments just uttered. In a little while, other subjects of conversation less embarrassing in their nature were introduced, and Mrs. Hardy acquired a more cheerful tone of feeling. It was late in the afternoon when her mother left, with the parting injunction to be sure to come down with her husband after tea.

CHAPTER IX.

Evening Hours.

Vous le pouvés, et le voulés;
Aussi, mon Dieu, à vous m'addresse:
Car le moyen seul sçavez
De m'oster hors de ma destresse.
* * * *
Las! hastez-vous, car plus n'en puis."

MARGUERITE D'ANGOULESME

Thou art able, thou art willing;
I unto Thee my prayer address:
Thou alone the means foreknowing
Whereby to save from this distress.
* * * *
Quick! lend thy strength; for mine is spent.

TRANSLATION.

THIS visit was a timely one. An earnest effort had been made by the daughter to throw off the dreadful state of depression from which she was suffering, and she was in a great degree successful. After her mother left, this better tone of feeling enabled her to make such preparation for receiving her husband, as promised something better than silence, tears, and reproaches. She tried to forget his cruel conduct at dinner-time; for, whenever thought went back to that incident, her heart stood still for a moment, and then gave a

bound that sent the blood leaping in burning pulses through all her veins.

At last she heard his hand upon the door, and his footsteps along the hall. She was in the sitting-room, but did not go down to meet him, thinking it best to wait until he came up and joined her. How breathlessly did she watch for his appearance, and how anxious was she lest the first glance at his countenance should meet a cold, stern, angry look! He ascended the stairs, and passed the sitting-room door without coming in, keeping on toward the room above.

"Jane!" How suddenly she started to her feet. It was his voice calling to her; and the tone was kind, even affectionate.

How lightly she sprung away, bounding in a few steps from the parlour, and answering as she came near the bed-room—

"Here I am, dear."

There was warmth on her cheeks, and light in her eyes, as she came into his presence, and laid her hands, that were extended towards him, into his.

He bent down and kissed her. So sudden was the transition of feeling consequent on this tender reception, that it required the strongest effort on her part to keep from tears. And why should tears be restrained? Ah!—they were signs of pain, not joy, in the eyes of her husband; and she dared

not permit their flow, lest he should regard them as rebuking messengers sent forth from a troubled heart!

Not the remotest allusion was made to the unhappy incident which, a few hours before, had darkened their souls' horizon. Both were desirous to have it pass, for the time, into deepest oblivion. While they yet talked pleasantly together, tea was announced, and they went down, arm in arm, to the dining-room. This proved the most home-like meal they had eaten together in their new dwelling. After it was over, they went into the parlour. Mr. Hardy had on his slippers and dressing gown; and the young husband, as he moved backwards and forwards the entire length of the two elegantly furnished rooms, with his wife on his arm, could not help, in his self-satisfied pride, repeating to himself—

> "I am monarch of all I survey,
> My right there is none to dispute."

The sun had set—the twilight fallen peacefully upon nature—and now the brilliant gas lamps were burning in the dwelling of Mr. Hardy, from which the world was all excluded. How very independent of this outer world he felt,—how entirely satisfied with his inner home-world. His wife had sung his favourite songs, and played his favourite airs, and exerted herself to please him in

every possible way that she could think of; and she was altogether successful. Mr. Hardy's spirit was basking in sunshine. Something of his high ideal of home was being realized.

"Mother was here this afternoon," said Mrs. Hardy, as her husband laid his hand upon a favourite volume, from which she knew he purposed reading some passages aloud.

"Ah! was she?"

"Yes; and I promised her, that if you were not engaged for this evening in any other way, we would go down to-night. Father sent particular word for us to come."

"Oh, but I *am* engaged," replied Mr. Hardy, half smiling, half serious.

"Are you? I am sorry. Father will be disappointed."

"Not so very much, I presume. It is not an age since he saw you."

"It may seem an age to him," remarked Mrs. Hardy, with the slightest apparent depression in her tone. "But, where are you going?"

"To stay at home," was firmly answered. "My engagement is with my wife this evening."

"She will excuse you." Mrs. Hardy tried to speak very lightly, and to smile in the gayest manner. But neither effort was entirely successful.

"Ah, but I don't mean to be excused."

"But father will expect us, John. I told mother, if you had no other engagement, we would come; and if they find out that we stayed at home, they will feel hurt."

"I did not authorize you to speak for me, did I?"

"I thought it would give you pleasure to give me and them pleasure," replied Mrs. Hardy; "and believing this, I spoke confidently."

"Charity begins at home, you know, Jane"—Mr. Hardy was very self-composed, and spoke with a quiet smile playing about his lips; "it begins at home, and afterwards diffuses itself. I want to cultivate the home-feeling a little;—to get used to my slippers and dressing gown. We men after a day's battle with the world, feel too comfortable at home to care about making night-forays. No, Jane, I cannot go out this evening."

Mr. Hardy was in earnest, and the tone in which he spoke the closing sentences satisfied his wife that he had not the slightest intention of complying with her wishes.

As a simple incident in their lives, unconnected with any unpleasant antecedents, this little circumstance could have had no power to mar their happiness. It would have been only a passing ripple on the surface of things, while all remained peaceful below. But, unfortunately, it stood in too close a relation with much that was painful to

their feelings; and both were conscious of the intruding presence of a shadow, the unwelcome precursor of an enemy to their peace.

Mrs. Hardy said no more on the subject. She did not even trust herself with the words, "Let it be as you wish, John," although they were on her lips. She feared to speak, lest more of disappointment should be visible than she wished to show; and so she sat in silence, with her eyes cast down.

Mr. Hardy's evil genius now found easy access to his mind, and at once began to whisper accusations against his young wife. He opened the book upon which he had laid his hand at the beginning of the conversation, and running over the leaves, selected a passage which he commenced reading aloud. As he did so, he perceived that his wife turned herself slightly from him. She was not herself conscious of doing so; although such was the fact.

Mr. Hardy read on for some time. Then he paused, and made some remarks on what he had been reading. His wife's responses showed plainly enough that her thoughts were not with the author's, upon whose beauties her husband was descanting. Mr. Hardy read on again; and again stopped for comment, this time purposely asking questions that his wife could not answer, without betraying her state of entire abstraction.

"Oh, well, if you don't wish to hear me read," he said, in an offended tone of voice, shutting the book as he spoke, "I have no desire to worry you with my poor performances."

"Oh, John! do not speak so to me!" Mrs. Hardy turned upon her husband an appealing look. "I always like to hear you read. Go on again, won't you? My thoughts were, for the moment, wandering. We cannot always help that. Read on, won't you! and please, John, do not speak so to me any more! You do not know how hard I find it to bear any tones from your lips that are not full of love."

"Speak to you in what way, Jane? I don't quite understand you."

There was affected surprise in Mr. Hardy's manner.

"As you spoke to me just now."

"How did I speak to you?" Mr. Hardy was cold and imperative.

"As if you were offended with me."

"And so I am."

"Oh, John! I cannot bear it!"

"Cannot bear what?"

"That you should feel anger towards me."

"I am not *angry*. What a silly child you are!"

"Then read on, won't you?"

"No; why should I? Your thoughts are far away from here. No book can interest you this evening."

"I will be all attention. Don't stop reading."

But Mr. Hardy, instead of re-opening the volume, tossed it from him upon the table, in a pettish manner.

The full heart of his wife could bear no more. Tears would flow. To conceal them, she turned herself from the light, so that her face was hidden from her husband's eyes. Mr. Hardy noticed the movement, and gave it a wrong interpretation.

A little while he sat meditating on what he should do or say. He felt very impatient at these strange and unexpected freaks in his young wife.

"Am I," he said to himself, "to have no will of my own?—no preferences? Must I, at the peril of tears and reproaches, stand ready to do her bidding at all seasons? Are her inclinings to be my law? Never! When I give up all freedom and manhood after that fashion, I shall cease to be John Hardy!"

"Jane!"—he turned towards his wife, speaking in the decided tone of one who has made up his mind,—"if you have set your heart on going to your father's to-night, I will send for a carriage. I have no desire to deprive you of any pleasure. As for myself, I do not wish to go out, and shall remain at home."

Mrs. Hardy made no reply. How, or what, could she answer? Do or say what she would,

act and word were certain to be misapprehended. So she neither moved, nor made any response.

"Shall I call the servant, and tell him to get you a carriage?"

Mr. Hardy spoke very firmly.

The cruelty of all this roused so indignant a spirit in the suffering heart of the young wife, that she almost yielded to the impulse which prompted her to say—

"Yes; call him:—but it will be the last service I shall ever receive at your hands!"

She had even turned, with a flashing glance upon him, and the sentence was about escaping from her tongue, when the whisper of a good spirit gave power to restrain the utterance of words that, under the circumstances, would only have been fruitful of evil. Mr. Hardy noted the sudden kindling of her eyes, and the indignant flush that for an instant mantled her cheek; and, for the moment, he was startled. He saw that there was a spirit in his wife which it might not be well to arouse.

Not another word passed between them during the evening. Mr. Hardy took up the volume he had been reading aloud, and tried, though vainly, to get interested in its pages; while Mrs. Hardy sat for nearly an hour, with her head resting on her bosom, silent and motionless as an effigy. How crushed, and weak, and hopeless she felt. All

things seemed closing around, and pressing upon her. No ray of light streamed in through the shadows that wrapped her spirit in darkness. In the despairing anguish of her soul, she prayed that she might die.

"O Lord!"—thus she directed her cry upwards—"this burden is too heavy for me! It is crushing me to the earth. Oh, let the cup pass from me. Let me die!"

And even while this cry of anguish was ascending, the thoughts of the husband were busy in accusations against his wife. She was the perverse wrong-doer, and he the sufferer. Her silence he called moodiness; its long continuance, her unyielding purpose to break down his endurance. "A woman's weapons!" he said to himself—"and they are an overmatch for most men. But John Hardy is no weakling. He takes care to be right; and right is strong as iron! She will understand this in good time. Let her struggle on as she will. It is but the unhappy waves of passion dashing against shores of immovable granite." Several times he was tempted into the utterance of some cold, cutting, ironical words. He was an adept in the use of speech—he had the organ of language; but, at the expense of some self-denial, he wisely forbore.

"This is a hopeful beginning"—so his thoughts formed themselves into a mental soliloquy, as his

head reclined on his pillow that night—"this is a great deal more than I bargained for! If this is wedded happiness, what a prospect for the future! If this is wifely submission, and loving devotion, how have I misconceived the import of the words! It is plain that a struggle for supremacy has begun in real earnest; and that before any peace is to be obtained, one side or the other must conquer. Shall I yield? Shall I step down from the manly position that is by nature my right and prerogative? Shall I be ruled by a woman? Is my reason to submit to a woman's variant impulses? Never! There is too much of the man about John Hardy for this! First or last, Jane must give way; and the sooner I can break down her determined self-will, the better it will be for both of us. It is a hard task to put upon a young husband—a sad reality, in lieu of the beautiful ideal so fondly cherished—a pillow of thorns, instead of a downy resting-place. But, when enemies to our peace rise up in our path, the only hope lies in conquest. And so, I must hold my true position with a sterner courage; and in battling for the right, I must give heavier and quicker blows in hope of a speedier victory."

And then, the self-approving John Hardy meditated new cruelties towards the wretched young creature, who, shrinking in hopeless suffering on the pillow beside him, was praying in her

sharp despair for strength, patience, and guiding light. But no strength came, and not even a star-ray penetrated the darkness of her soul.

After an hour of wakefulness, she became aware, from his deep breathing, that her husband slept. Once assured that all his senses were locked in slumber, the power to lie motionless, or even remain in bed, was instantly removed; and she was impelled to rise and move about the room like some uneasy spirit. She felt strangely; and a cold shudder chilled her to the heart, as the thought of insanity flashed over her mind, conscious as she was that suffering had already drawn every fibre of endurance to its utmost tension.

"O Lord, help me!" she again prayed, in trembling fear. "Help me! save me!"

And she fell upon her knees, and for a long time remained bowed in spirit before Heaven. Gradually a more tranquil state of mind was attained, and she returned to the pillow she had left, though not for a long time to find the oblivion of her wo.

CHAPTER X.

The Non-Arrival.

"Everywhere,
Just what they will, such cruel freaks are play'd;
And hence the turmoil in this world of ours,
The turmoil never ending, still beginning,
The wailing and the tears."—Rogers.

Mr. Harley awoke early the next morning, and while his wife still slept, meditated the questions of right, duty, prerogative, and the sources of domestic peace. His conclusions were simple confirmations of the night's purposes. All their present trouble arose, in his view, from the fact, that his wife desired to have her own will in all things, a desire so unreasonable and so unrealizable, that the very fact of its existence filled him with astonishment. The pertinacity she had exhibited vexed him. The peculiar character of his manliness gave him a feeling of contempt for woman's strength, and he felt piqued that so fragile, mild, and heretofore so gentle and yielding a woman, should be able to hold him in something like defiance.

Very coolly, and after grave deliberation, did Mr. Hardy decide upon his course of action towards his wife, at least for that day. If there was any failure on her part to meet him cheerfully, and to diffuse that sunlight in his home, which he had a right to expect from her presence, he would immediately withdraw himself, and that in a way which she must feel to be a rebuke.

"If she wish to play the game of endurance, she will find her match in me," he said resolutely to himself.

Mrs. Hardy did not awake until after her husband had left the room. Perceiving that it was late, she hurriedly attired herself, so as to be ready to join him at the breakfast-table, when the bell rang. Her mind had become much calmer through the restoring power of sleep, and she had clearer views of her duty, and of the necessity of studying more carefully the tastes and peculiarities of her husband, so as to adapt herself to them.

"I must be more of a woman, and less of a child," she said;—"having stepped forth into the world, I must meet the world with a brave, enduring spirit. My husband cannot mean to do me wrong, he only misunderstands me. I am too sensitive. Hitherto, all my wishes have found so prompt a gratification, that I have learned to expect too much. Why should I not have disappointments to bear as well as others? There

must be something wrong in my manner, or else John would not be so impatient with me."

The breakfast-bell rung while Mrs. Hardy thus talked within herself; and she stepped forth quickly from her room, to join her husband as he descended the stairs.

"Good morning!" she said, with a smile; and bent forward towards him, expecting the usual kiss at meeting. But her husband did not offer the desired salute.

What a chill of disappointment came over her feelings! She drew her hand within his arm, compelling herself to the act, and thus they entered the breakfast-room.

Mr. Hardy looked serious, and showed no inclination to converse. Mrs. Hardy tried to appear at ease, and to seem cheerful. But the aspect of her husband's face troubled her; and she felt the little artificial strength she had summoned up, gradually dying out. Suddenly all self-control departed, and, powerless to restrain them, tears began to flow down her cheeks. There was no sobbing, nor visible agitation of the body; no sign of inward pain except the silently falling drops of grief. At first, Mr. Hardy did not observe them, so perfectly were all other manifestations repressed; but, looking up in a few moments, and seeing them glittering upon her cheeks and filling her eyes, he let knife and fork drop from his hands, as

if in indignant surprise. A little while he gazed sternly upon his weeping wife; then, without uttering a word, he pushed back his chair, rose, and left the room. He did not go upstairs nor linger in the parlours, but took his hat from the stand in the passage, and immediately went out of the house.

Mrs. Hardy's tears suddenly ceased to flow She tried to rise and follow her husband, but all strength had forsaken her limbs. She tried to call after him, but her vocal organs were paralyzed. And so she sat motionless for a little while, until the life-blood, which had receded under this new blow, came back again along its wonted currents, and the power of acting from the will was restored. Very quietly she arose, and, with slow steps, passed from the breakfast-room, and up into the sitting-room above. She had strength to go no farther. Two hours afterwards, she aroused herself from a state bordering on mental stupor; and by a forced effort, compelled herself to go across to her own room, and there make some changes in her toilette, so as to be in a condition to see visitors should they call. Happily, she was spared the pain of meeting any one during the morning.

As the time for her husband's return approached, Mrs. Hardy felt herself growing weaker and weaker, and less able to keep back the tears that

dimmed her vision. At last, the little French clock on the mantel-piece struck the hour of two.

Hurriedly did Mrs. Hardy start from her chair; anxiously she surveyed herself in the glass; then bathed her eyes with cold water, hoping to remove from it the red traces of weeping. Yet even as she held the wet towel to her face, tears mingled with the water by which she hoped to hide all evidence of their flow.

"Vain! vain!" she murmured; "I am not impassive marble!"

A few moments elapsed, and yet the dreaded sound of her husband's feet along the passage and on the stairs did not smite upon her ears. Gradually suspense changed to a new feeling.

"He is late to-day," she said to herself, as she glanced towards the clock, and saw that, since the stroke of two, the minute-hand had moved forward, until it pointed to the second figure on the dial.

A sudden fear that Mr. Hardy did not mean to come home before night-fall, chilled her heart. Could it be possible that, nursing his anger against her, he could act with such deliberate cruelty?

Five, ten, fifteen minutes more went by. The servant knocked lightly at the door Mrs. Hardy answered in a tone of forced composure.

"Please, ma'am," inquired the man, "is Mr. Hardy coming home to dinner?"

"Yes," she answered.

"It is nearly half-past two," said the man.

"Something has detained him. Do not serve dinner until he comes."

At three o'clock, there was another rap at the door of her room.

"Shall I bring up the dinner, ma'am? I don't think Mr. Hardy is coming."

"You can clear the table; I do not wish for anything," replied Mrs. Hardy.

"Shall I bring you a cup of tea?"

"You may, if you please."

"And a piece of toast?"

"Yes."

These were brought, but not tasted. Mrs. Hardy consented to receive them, merely to gratify the servant, and to save appearances.

During the afternoon, her mother came in. Jane met her with a more composed aspect than she had thought it possible to assume, though all traces of pain could not be hidden.

"Why did you not come down last night?" inquired Mrs. Enfield. "Your father was very much disappointed."

"Mr. Hardy returned just enough fatigued with care and business to wish for a quiet evening at home," replied the daughter; "and I could not find it in my heart to urge him to go out with me."

"Ah, I see how it is; John is going to be one of your home-loving men," said Mrs. Enfield. "And I am glad of it. How much better than if he saw no attraction at home. In this, my child, you have great cause for thankfulness. I know many wives who would give worlds, did they possess them, if so they could endow their husbands with home-loving qualities. This, depend upon it, Jane, is one of the prime virtues."

Mrs. Hardy sighed faintly, but made no answer.

"It is well," she thought within herself, "that my mother sees no deeper. May she remain ignorant, as now, of the fearful ordeal through which I am passing."

"I am going to spend the afternoon with you, and your father will be here to tea. If you cannot go to see him, he is coming to see you."

"Oh, I am glad he is coming!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardy, light breaking over her face. "I was so unhappy last evening about disappointing him, that I cried myself to sleep."

"That was foolish, my love; and hardly fair to your husband, particularly as he preferred staying at home for the enjoyment of your company. Be very guarded on this point, Jane. Young husbands never like to see clouds on their wives' faces. They look for sunshine, not shadows and raindrops. You have known but little of disappointment in your short life; and therefore it is hard to bear"

"I never felt myself so weak as I now am. Life is all a new experience to me. But I shall grow wiser and stronger by and by. It was wrong in me to feel disappointed last night, when Mr. Hardy said he did not wish to go out, desiring rather to enjoy the rest and quiet of his own home, after a wearying day's labour. It did seem to me that he was selfish in refusing to go; and I am afraid I was not as amiable, in consequence, as I should have been."

"That was wrong, very wrong, my child!" said Mrs. Enfield.

"Perhaps it was; and I have been sufficiently punished. But I will henceforth study self-denial, and a cheerful acquiescence in all my husband's wishes."

"There ought to be no self-denial, Jane," replied Mrs. Enfield. "That word is cold and hard. Ought not your husband's wishes to be your pleasure?"

"Oh yes."

"Then seek to make them such. If he, in the beginning of your wedded life, manifests what seems to you an undue regard for himself, and a forgetfulness of those loving attentions once so abundantly bestowed, do not let this bring clouds over the clear horizon of your spirit to darken the sun of love. Still keep your sky clear, that the sun may shine. Love creates love. Seek his

pleasure, in all things: yield to his wishes in every particular; and soon from the surface of his life, will be reflected back upon you affection's warmest beams. Thus you will bind him to you with a cord not to be broken, and all your after life will overflow with blessings."

While Mrs. Enfield spoke, her daughter laid her face, as much for concealment as in weakness, upon her mother's bosom. Recovering in a little while the self-control she was losing, she lifted her head, and replied—

"I am neither very wise, nor very strong, mother. Some things look dark to me, and some things I have not yet gained strength to bear. But wisdom and strength will both come, I trust, in their own good time. I pray for them daily."

"Every new sphere of life brings a new experience," said Mrs. Enfield, "and, in most cases, new trials. The change from maidenhood to wifehood rarely, if ever, takes place without some jarring in the life-machinery. But, if love be in the heart, all the new movements will soon acquire the most perfect accord. Brides' tears water the garden of love."

"It may be so, mother. But do they not, sometimes, give fresh life to weeds as well as flowers?"

"There should be no weeds in love's garden." was the smiling response

"Then it must not be planted in a human heart." Mrs. Hardy spoke in sober earnest.

"You may be right, my child," remarked Mrs. Enfield in a graver voice. "Weeds will spring up in the human soul, as well as goodly plants. Be it our task to uproot the one, and cultivate the other. And now, dear, let us change the subject. How is my young housekeeper getting on in her new establishment? Everything looks well, as far as I have seen. You are doing wonders."

"Don't praise too early, my good mamma. Everything is new, and in order. Wait a few months, and then see how my housekeeping will speak for itself. I have some doubt in regard to the heartiness of the commendation you will then give."

A lighter and more cheerful tone of feeling now prevailed; and the afternoon passed so pleasantly to Mrs. Hardy, that she almost wondered at it, considering the unhappy state of affairs between her husband and herself.

At the usual hour, Mr. Hardy returned home, and met his wife and mother-in-law in such a bland, frank, and gladsome way, that Mrs. Hardy felt her heart grow warmer in the sunshine of his presence. Mr. Enfield came in soon afterwards; and Mr. Hardy, grasping his hand with impressive cordiality, said in a familiar off-hand way—

"You didn't succeed in your design last evening."

"What design?" was naturally inquired.

"That of making *our* home-light dim, in order that *your's* might burn the brighter! Were you very much disappointed at not seeing us?"

"Yes; why didn't you come down?"

"Home was too pleasant, and its magnetism too strong. Now, do you wish to know what I thought of your invitation to spend the evening?"

"What did you think of it?"

"That you were a very selfish man."

"How so?"

"To covet my property!"

"Your property?"

"My enjoyment, then! For nearly twenty years, the presence of your daughter has daily been like a broad beam of sunshine in your dwelling. She has set there, and risen in the fair horizon of my home. And scarcely has the light begun to shine, ere you seek to remove it, that it may fall upon you again."

"And do you greatly wonder, that in darkness I pine for the vanished light, or covet a few fleeting rays?" said Mr. Enfield, smiling, yet serious.

"Perhaps I ought not to wonder. Nor should you be astonished if I feel too happy in these

golden beams to wish them withdrawn for an instant."

"We did not ask you to let us remove the light from your candlestick; we only desired you to come to us in the light, and let us share for a brief season the mutual blessing. But like most young husbands, I see you are selfish, and too happy in your wedded life, to be able to sympathize with the father and mother. I would not complain of this. Jane is the apple of our eyes. Make her happy, and we shall be happy. If you will not come to us, we will come to you. All the green things in our hearts would blanch to a sickly hue, if the radiant light of her presence were wholly removed."

"If her life is not crowned with happiness," said Mr. Hardy emphatically, "the fault shall not be mine." And he glanced with a tender expression towards his young wife, who caught the look and treasured it like a precious thing in her heart.

Very kind, gentle, and considerate towards his wife was Mr. Hardy during the whole evening; and to the parents he was unusually attentive. Not a shadow flitted over his open, manly countenance; not a tone escaped him that left upon any one a depressing influence. His wife looked at him at times in wonder, as sober memory recalled the incidents of the day. She had not

inquired the reason of his failure to return at dinner-time, and he had made no allusion to the fact. Every time she thought of this her spirits sank, and her heart trembled. But with all the force of will that she could command, did she push aside unpleasant recollections of the past, and seek to rest in the more genial present.

As Mr. and Mrs. Enfield walked home that night, the former said—

"Things look brighter and more hopeful. There is something exceedingly agreeable about Mr. Hardy. I particularly like his kind, considerate manner towards Jane. He seemed very desirous to make her feel happy. And yet, from some cause or other, she was not altogether at ease."

"I am afraid," remarked Mrs. Enfield, "that she expects too much from her husband."

"An error into which most young wives fall. But time will correct this. I cannot say that Mr. Hardy is my choice for our daughter's husband. I think he lacks refinement of feeling, and delicacy of perception. Still, he is a man of strong common sense, and sterling manly qualities."

"And, above all, a home-loving man."

"One of the chief essentials of domestic happiness. Jane might have done a great deal worse."

"Very true," answered Mrs. Enfield. "We have cause for thankfulness that she has done so well. I talked to her very seriously about her

state of mind this afternoon. She has been making herself unhappy, I find, because Mr. Hardy preferred staying at home to coming down to our house last evening."

"He might have gratified her; I don't like to see young husbands putting on the selfish quite so soon. It comes early enough after the honeymoon, in all cases."

"I think there is some excuse for him, considering his peculiar character and feelings. He had set his heart upon a home, you know; and gained it through slight opposition. Company intruded upon his first domestic evening, and we asked him to spend with us the hours of the second. We were, perhaps, a little thoughtless; and should not wonder at his resistance. He wanted to enjoy the quiet of his own dwelling."

"You are no doubt right," said Mr. Enfield. "I only desire their happiness. God grant them blessings in full measure."

The face of Mr. Hardy as he parted with Mr and Mrs. Enfield at the door was full of smiles, and his voice as bland as summer. His wife stood by his side, and, as he turned from the door, after bidding them good night, she put her hand within his arm, and drew close to him. They walked along the passage, and ascended the stairs to the sitting-room, in silence. As they came into the stronger light, Mrs. Hardy looked up

into his face, with a loving word just ready to leap from her tongue. She forced back all remembrance of the day's sad trials; and cared now only for the affectionate smiles of her husband, in the warmth of which she had passed the evening. A single glance caused her to recede a pace, and sent the bounding life-blood back upon her heart. His eyes were stern and cold; his brow disfigured by a frown; his lips just parting with an angry curl.

"Did you think I could forget?" He spoke harshly. "John Hardy never forgets!"

The stricken young wife staggered backward to a chair, and sank down upon it, weak as a little child.

"John Hardy never forgets." He repeated the words in a slower and more emphatic voice. "Such things are not to be forgotten. It is no light thing to darken with clouds and vapours the clear sky of a man's home—to rob him of the highest earthly good—to assail him with rebuking words. And then, forsooth, to expect oblivion on his part! There may be men who will tamely bear all this; but John Hardy is not one of them. He can be gentle as an infant, if met by loving acquiescence; but is hard as the nether millstone under opposition; and, as I have said before, the sooner you comprehend this, the better it will be for both of us"

For a little while, surprise, grief terror, alike tended to render Jane Hardy utterly speechless her husband stood erect, gazing down upon her crouching form. Then repressing, with some effort, his inclination to give utterance to yet more cutting words, he turned away; and seating himself by a centre-table, on which the gas-light was falling, took up a book, and attempted to get absorbed in its contents. He read on for a page or two, with only a dim comprehension of the subject, his thoughts really upon his wife, expectation looking each moment for some sign of feeling from her. But she remained silent and motionless. Five or ten minutes afterwards, he looked up again, to see if he could detect what he could regard as some sign of conscious endurance—some giving way of the statue-like position. But the repose of that slender form was complete—almost death-like.

He now arose, and with a firm step went from the sitting-room to the bed-room. Here he remained for nearly ten minutes, momently in expectation of seeing his wife enter, or hearing her footsteps. But he waited in vain.

He was perplexed and troubled. Did he repent and reproach himself for his harsh, cruel conduct towards his young wife,—as he sat looking with troubled feelings, in that long silence, upon her pale, suffering countenance? Did the scales fall

from his eyes? Was he able to see the truth even at a distance? No! no! John Hardy was a man always "right with himself!" He took time to consider; and his conclusions were generally life-long convictions. He reasoned out his propositions, and the result was a law. After this, he could not but remain unchangeable. No, he did not repent, for he saw no cause for repentance. What had he done? Could any one, even his unhappy wife, point to a single act that was wrong in itself? He had only reacted upon her unreasonable action. He had simply stood still, refusing to be swept aside by the waves of a woman's impulses, as a thing of no consideration. If she were hurt in the collision, he was in no respect to blame.

"No, no—John Hardy is not responsible:" thus he talked with himself. "John Hardy is a man, and knows a man's rights and duties. He will never give up the one, nor shrink from the other. John Hardy is neither unjust, nor unreasonable. On this issue he will defy the world."

And fortifying himself in this self-complacent notion, he resolved to let his wife wear herself out by her own "whims," as long as she might please. If she chose to be moody, he would not trouble himself at her silence. She could not fail to be unhappy, while the conversation was unrenewed

but the fault was her's, not his! He had spoken last; and he would patiently await her answer.

To the sitting-room he again directed his steps, and there he acted out the determination he had thus formed. But his silence was as unsuccessful as had been his words. Midnight came, and not a syllable had fallen from the lips of either. It was more than time to seek their nightly repose To light the candle, and place it in his wife's hand, was the only signal whereby he deigned to intimate his will.

CHAPTER XI.

Absent again.

"Henceforth be warn'd; and know that Pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness."—WORDSWORTH.

WHEN Mr. Hardy awoke the next morning, he discovered that Jane had already left her place by his side. He raised himself on his arm, and looked round the room, listening as he did so; but he neither saw her form, nor heard any move ment in the adjoining chamber.

Rising and dressing himself quickly, under an oppressive sense of evil, he went hastily from the bed-room to the parlour, where, to his relief, he found his wife engaged in setting things to rights. She turned her face toward him as he entered, and gave him a quiet glance of almost indifferent recognition.

"Good morning!" he said.

"Good morning!" How like the passionless echo of his own voice did her responsive greeting sound in his ears. John Hardy was not the man

to humour or solicit! No, no. He was made of different stuff from ordinary men.

"Game to the last!" This was the coarse, half contemptuous, half angry mental ejaculation of the perfect model of a man! "Game to the last! Well, be it so! There is one woman in the world who will have to bend or break."

Turning from the apartment, he went back to his dressing-room, to complete his toilette, and did not come down again, until the bell rang for breakfast. He hastened to the dining-room, and found his wife already at the table.

Looking at her now more intently, he noticed an expression never before seen on her countenance; and one, to the interpretation of which, no experience he had yet attained in the observation of mental workings gave any clue. He did not repeat his good-morning, and she made no remark. Her manner, he noticed, was quiet and very even. There was not the smallest evidence of any smouldering excitement beneath her calm exterior. Her eyes, usually so bright as to constitute a marked feature of her countenance, had partially lost their fire, and the soul did not seem to look out of them upon the world of visible things with any degree of interest. She poured out his coffee, and helped him to one thing after another, with movements more like those of an automaton than of a living being.

"Why don't you eat something, Jane?" asked Mr. Hardy, breaking through the ice of silence and reserve.

"I have no appetite now." She answered in a voice that betrayed not the smallest sign of feeling

"Are you not well?"

"I feel very well." There was not the slightest change in tone or manner. Mr. Hardy gazed steadily into her face, but she did not give back a single glance. Her eyes were not averted, nor her face turned aside. She seemed to be looking at her husband; but it was plain that his form made no distinct image of itself on the retina.

As Mr. Hardy could see no possible connexion between anything that he had done, and the existence of a state of mind necessary to produce the external demeanour manifested by his wife, he felt wholly justified in the conclusion, that only one-half of all her apparent suffering was real, and that this real suffering was but the writhing of pride and disappointed self-will. So there was not found in his heart the first motion towards a relenting spirit. He pitied her weakness and her suffering; but his mind was clear as to his own duty in the case. For him to yield was impossible.

He sipped his coffee and tried to eat, but the motionless form of his wife, sitting directly before him, soon had the effect of taking away all appe-

tite. Several times cutting words formed themselves into sentences on his tongue, and were kept back from utterance only through the prudent restraint of sober second thought. At last he arose from the table, and was leaving the room without a word, when his wife calledto him by name—

"John." The tone was free from impulse, as the gentlest summer-breeze.

Mr. Hardy paused, and turned towards his wife.

"Shall you be home at dinner-time?" There was neither weakness nor passion in her voice.

"Yes, if you will promise me one thing."

"Name it." Still her tones were surprisingly even.

"To meet your husband with a smiling countenance."

"I am not well skilled at dissembling, John," was the reply, calmly and coldly made. "If there is darkness in my heart there cannot be light on my countenance."

She had risen from her place at the table, and now she moved to her husband's side, and passed with him from the room, walking on with a firm step.

"I give you credit for being an arch-dissembler," was his unfeeling answer.

"Time will probably correct your error." Mrs. Hardy said no more than this.

"You are very calm, very cool, very self-possessed!" There was a slight sneer in the voice. No response was made, and there followed a brief silence. Mr. Hardy took up his hat, and moved onwards.

"John."

There was a power in that passionless tone that instantly arrested his steps. He turned partly round.

"Shall you be home at dinner-time?"

"I think not."

"Say you will, or you will not. Uncertainty disturbs the mind, and suspense is painful."

"I will not." Mr. Hardy's face flushed to the temples, and his voice had in it a sharp tone of anger. He stood, almost glaring at his wife. But she, evincing no emotion, said, "Very well;" and receding a pace or two, as if pushed back by an invisible hand, turned slowly around, and going with noiseless footsteps up the stairs, vanished like a spirit from his sight.

Not long afterwards she rang the bell, and said to the servant—

"Mr. Hardy is not coming home to dinner; so you can tell the cook not to make any preparation for him. If any one calls and asks for me, say that I am not well, and cannot be seen. You may bring me a cup of tea about twelve or one o'clock."

After sitting in a dreamy attitude for a considerable time, she went into her room, laid herself down, and, closing her eyes, hid her face in a pillow. As moveless as a sleeper she remained, until disturbed by the knock of the servant, who came with the tea she had directed him to bring. She received through the partly opened door the small tray, on which were tea, toast, and a delicate piece of boiled fowl; and said—

"I will ring for you, when I wish the tray removed."

In about twenty minutes the bell was rung, and the tray passed to the servant. There was scarcely a visible diminution in the quantity of food it had at first contained.

When Mr. Hardy came home a little before nightfall, he found his wife sitting in the parlour. She had dressed herself with exquisite taste, and, though pale, and with an expression of sadness on her young face, looked as beautiful in his eyes as she had ever appeared. All day long he had been writing bitter things against her, and meditating new schemes of torture for breaking down her indomitable will, that seemed to grow stronger under every measure of opposition; and he had returned to the scene of contest with renewed strength. The sight of her changed, wan face, and slender form—an image of frailty, not endurance, rebuked his harsh purpose, and softened him

towards her. As she rose to meet him, and made a feeble effort to smile, he said, kindly—

"I hope you feel better this evening, dear?"

"My head does not ache so intensely" she replied.

"Has it ached all day?"

"Yes. It began soon after I arose this morning, and the pain has piereed my temples as if an arrow were imbedded in it."

"It does not ache so much now?" said Mr. Hardy, in a kind, inquiring voice.

"No; the pain is gradually subsiding."

"I am sorry you have been ill all day."

It was on his lips to remark farther, that, had he known she was ill, he would not have remained away until evening. But he withheld this little concession, lest she might regard it as indicative of a yielding temper, and find in it a warrant for longer resistance.

Mrs. Hardy did not make any response; and her husband was not in a state of mind that encouraged pleasant conversation. Almost of necessity, therefore, reserve, silence, and a cold demeanour supervened.

There was one thing about his wife which more than annoyed Mr. Hardy. It troubled him. This was her passionless exterior; the same impenetrableness that he failed to break through in the morning, although he had thrust against it

sharply. At the tea-table he often and intently looked into her calm face, and absent dreamy eyes, seeking to penetrate their mystery; but the riddle remained unread. Strongly as he resisted it, the conviction that a change, beyond the control of her will, had taken place in the character of her feelings, steadily forced itself upon him. She seemed a creature void of emotion; a mere breathing, moving effigy of the lovely being he had, a little while before, clasped to his bosom with infinite joy.

Ah, if John Hardy's perceptions had been somewhat clearer—if he had possessed the faculty of thinking out of himself—if he could have comprehended what really existed in the mind of his wife,—all might not have been lost. Loving consideration, manifested in true loving acts—words and tones, with a heart of manly tenderness in them,—these would, in time, have melted away the icy coldness which nothing else could remove.

But alas for John Hardy, and his beautiful, true-hearted, but wronged and suffering wife! The defect in his character was radical. To have done this, he must have ceased to be the John Hardy whose name he was so fond of repeating with pride and pleasure.

After tea—the meal had been taken in silence—they went to the sitting-room, walking side by

side, but not arm in arm, each feeling repelled rather than attracted.

"I have an engagement this evening," said Mr. Hardy.

"Have you?"

This was all the response made by his wife. She evinced neither surprise nor regret.

"Yes, and I may not be home till late."

Mr. Hardy fully expected that this would touch the right chord. But he was mistaken. His wife remained impassive. There was no warmer flush on her cheeks; no lighting up of her calm eyes; no single word of remonstrance or acquiescence. He stood for a little while, half irresolute, puzzled, and disappointed

"As you are not well, you had better not sit up for me. I may be out till twelve o'clock."

Mrs. Hardy looked at him steadily, but without the slightest change of countenance.

"Did you hear what I said?" Mr. Hardy was disturbed, and he showed the weakness.

"Certainly. Why not?" How icy were both tone and manner.

"Good evening!" The young husband turned away abruptly.

It was, as he had intimated, nearly twelve o'clock when he returned. The last hour, for the sake of keeping his word, had been spent in a wearisome walk up and down many streets. He

did not come in, as might be supposed, in the best possible humour with either himself or his wife. Not a little to his surprise, he found her almost in the very place where he had left her sitting nearly five hours before. She was engaged on a fine piece of needlework.

"Why, Jane!" he said fretfully; "I supposed you were asleep hours ago!"

"You were mistaken. I have not felt sleepy."

"Come," said Mr. Hardy; "it is nearly twelve o'clock."

"I will follow you presently."

"Come now."

"I have waited your time, John; and now you will have to wait mine."

There was no quicker movement of the voice—no sign of feeling—no averting of the counte nance.

Mr. Hardy turned away quickly, and went to the bed-room. It was nearly a whole hour before Mrs. Hardy followed him. She found her husband asleep, and was careful not to awaken him. Silently she moved about the room, and silently laid herself upon the bed. Wearied nature soon brought to her sad spirit a sweet oblivion, locking up all her senses until the advent of another day.

CHAPTER XII.

End of the Honeymoon.

"[All] angry, coarse, and harsh expression
Shows love to be a mere profession;
Proves that the heart is none of his,
Or soon expels him if it is."—COWPER.

FROM this time forth, daily and weekly, did Mr. Hardy look for some change in his wife's frigid exterior; but he looked in vain. She was calm, cold, dreamy, passionless,—at least to him. Ever prompt in all her household duties, she left no room whatever for blame; and when his fretted self-will overleaped itself into impatience, and when in his blindness he thrust sharply at her feelings, the point of his weapon seemed instantly to lose its temper, for it made no perceptible wound. When her parents or friends came to see them, she put on a different and warmer exterior, though not the bright one of old; and when she went abroad into company, she appeared to take a quiet interest in persons and things, though not so much so as in by-gone times. But, upon her husband, she never smiled, at home or abroad

To him, she was always the same, at all times, under all circumstances, and in all places.

And so the honeymoon, and many other moons, passed. The new life, to which both had looked as full of the heart's deepest joy—as warm with golden sunshine, and rich in all delights—gave no more beauty nor fragrance than an arctic summer.

Around the word "home" had clustered, in Mr. Hardy's mind, a world of felicities. It had involved his highest earthly ideal. Wife, children, home! How often had these words found an utterance in his heart, and an echo on his lips. Possessing these, he felt that he could defy the world. But the home which had been gained by Mr. Hardy, under the too eager impulses of a strong self-will, failed even from the beginning to realize the high ideal he had so fondly cherished. The sun he had commanded to shine, and to fill every chamber of his dwelling with light and warmth, failed to do his bidding; and the hand he had swept almost imperiously across the heavens, only disturbed the atmosphere, and made the clouds thicker and darker, instead of removing them. He had caged a beautiful singing bird, but its song ceased from the moment the gilded doors of its prison were closed.

Under the effort to be cheerful, and to make her husband's home all that he could desire, Mrs.

Hardy, during the early periods of their new life, still maintained a calm and quiet exterior, and ministered in all ways possible to his comfort. But how poor a substitute was duty for love! there was no heart in it all.

It was soon whispered about, that the young wife was not happy. Everybody was surprised, and inquiries as to the cause passed from lip to lip. All kinds of suggestions were made; and this approximation to the truth was reached,—that "She did not want to begin housekeeping!"

Of course, the general sentiment was against her. She was called selfish, indolent, unreasonable—not worthy of so good a partner. Wives blamed, and ambitious maidens envied her; while her husband received a world of sympathy.

As for Mr. Hardy—the man whose resolute purposes had, hitherto, overridden all that came between himself and a cherished end,—he found, in the growing impassiveness of his wife, whom even sharp words could not spur into reaction, a new barrier, the strongest and strangest which had yet upreared itself in his path. He could meet and overcome circumstances, bending them to his will; but, when he came to the heart of a woman, and sought almost impiously to regulate its beat, and govern its impulses, he found the task altogether the most difficult he had ever assumed. But still he saw no cause to change his estimate

of his wife's character. To him, the belief that she was but struggling on for the victory, was as fixed as an axiom; and, while he believed this, to yield and conciliate was impossible. "Break or bend," was still his stern motto in the case. But *how* to break, had become the puzzling question. All at once the writhing heart had ceased to struggle in his grasp. Again and again the iron fingers contracted suddenly, or in a steadily accumulating pressure, until all the man's vigorous strength, increased by passion, was applied even to the point of exhaustion. And yet, not the feeblest quiver of pain was observable.

"Is the woman alive or dead!" he would sometimes exclaim after one of these cruel efforts to find the region of vitality.

A few months more, and Mrs. Hardy's states of feeling became singularly variable. She would pass hours, and sometimes almost days, weeping and grieving like a disappointed child,—answering no inquiries, and taking no food. Then she would fall into the saddest abstraction, which nothing could overcome. Afterwards would come a quiet devotion to the duties of her household. Through all these varying aspects of mind, Mr. Hardy was unchanged in his interpretation of their meaning; the pride of manhood, as he called it, was too strong to permit of any yielding, or humouring on his part.

"The bird is caged,"--this was one of his mentally spoken figures of speech,—"and all beating against the bars is vain. The bruised wings must fold themselves in weakness or acquiescence. There is no other hope."

Mr. Hardy, as we have before remarked, had the organ of language pretty largely developed. His thoughts were active, and his tongue always stood ready to give utterance to them. It was almost impossible for him to think intently without talking. Had he been more meditative, and, consequently, more silent, opportunity for a healthier change in his wife's feelings might have been given. But he was constantly thinking bitter things against her, and as constantly saying them. He believed that, as continual dropping wears away a stone, a continual utterance of his views in regard to her conduct, would, in the end, satisfy her that she was understood, and that her effort to break him down was hopeless. From milder forms of speech, his ingenuity led him on to the framing of bolder thrusts and more cruel accusations

"I thought,' he said, one day, "that I was .aking a dove to my bosom; but"—

He looked steadily at his wife, expecting some flash of interest to pass over her face. But she seemed as one who had not heard him speak.

—"I was in error."

He uttered these words slowly, still looking at her with a severe countenance. She gave back neither answer nor sign.

—"A viper to sting me, is a poor substitute!"

It was a very cruel speech. Yet, for all that was visible, it did not seem to penetrate the consciousness of her to whom it was addressed; and her husband, after he had given forth the unmanly sentence, felt some relief in the impression that she had not really comprehended his words. But he was in error, here, as in most things that related to his wife. She *had* heard, and the sentence was already ineffaceably written down in her memory, among the many cruel speeches uttered by him since their marriage.

Mr. and Mrs. Enfield were both puzzled to understand the true workings of their daughter's mind. To them, she had all at once become reserved and incommunicative. Deceived, in a measure, by Mr. Hardy's bland speeches, and by his uniformly gentle, yielding, and affectionate manner towards Jane whenever they saw them together, the father and mother received an impression that their daughter was most to blame for the state of affairs unhappily existing. A single intimation of this at once changed her whole demeanour towards them. To her, this was the going out of the last earth-light shining upon her dark, rough, thorny path. That *they* should so misunderstand

her;—it was the portion in her cup, bitterest of all! From that time, she was as incomprehensible to them as to others, and met any questions or remonstrances they felt called upon to make, with the same coldness that marked her conduct towards her husband.

A woman of ordinary character, and less delicacy of feeling, would, in a short time, have accommodated herself to Mr. Hardy's peculiarities, and have found ample compensation in the position acquired by the marriage; or, one of more shrewdness and worldliness would have taken advantage of his weak points, to bend him wholly to her will; for such men can always be governed, if their wives know the art. But Mrs. Hardy was too true a woman to find any compensation of this sort. She loved unselfishly, and her heart asked as genuine a love in return. Failing to receive this, the light of her life grew dim, and the shadows of death fell coldly upon her heart. Ah! if that foolish young husband could have known the value of the jewel he was grinding to powder under his feet—could have seen deep enough into the heart of his wife to understand its pure, loving qualities—could have forgotten himself long enough to gain some true perception of her real character—what a life-joy might have been his! But he was unworthy to possess the treasure he had coveted, and now that it was in

his hand, its lustre had grown dim. Ah! how many thousands and thousands of pure, true, loving-hearted women are wedded by just such men as John Hardy, who vainly imagine that to win is to enjoy. They mate too high, and in mating they wed misery instead of happiness. It is not always physical suffering—the sickness of the frail body alone—that whitens so many cheeks, and throws a veil of sadness over so many homes. No, no. The "poor health" of wives has often a deeper source than friends and neighbours imagine. There is a sickness of the soul, that saps the life-fountains more surely than any bodily ailment. The heart needs sustenance as well as the brain. Its aliment is love; and, deprived of this, will not its pulses grow daily feebler and feebler? Alas! this attempted mating of grosser with finer natures—what cruel wrongs are born in the unnatural union!

There was one quality about Mr. Hardy, which, under most conditions of life, may almost be classed with the virtues;—we mean, firmness. Phrenologists would, doubtless, have found the organ representing it of unusual size. This quality gave great persistence to his character, and was *one* of the secrets of his steadily advancing position among his fellow-men. He rarely abandoned a purpose, though it was his custom to gain his ends rather by smiling policy than

frowning force,—combativeness, in the technical sense, not being largely developed. There was something, too, of wiliness about him, that enabled him to gain his ends without exciting opposition, and to lead men, while off their guard, to work towards the accomplishment of his favourite schemes. Thus, he was a tyrant, without boldness; seeking to rule, yet coveting the good opinions of the very men he would bend to his will. But tyrants of his class usually lay aside, at home, some of the exterior veils that hide their real character from the eyes of men. Having secured their wives, they set themselves at once to the work of ruling them. Pride—or what they regard as manliness—will not permit them to pursue the same course at home, that is pursued by them in the world. No smooth policy, no smiling duplicity, no seeming acquiescence where the real purpose remains strong as ever, marks their conduct in the family-circle. There, the uttered word becomes the changeless law. The quality of persistence, to which we have referred, strengthened as it was, in Mr. Hardy's case, by his deficient perceptions, made the case of his unhappy young wife a hopeless one. He was not able, from the peculiar nature of his mental organization, to see any cause for her singular state of mind, but thwarted self-will. It was plain to him, that, having been permitted, in the

home of her girlhood, to do pretty much as she pleased, and to rule her parents through appeals to their partial love, she was now seeking to attain the same control over her husband; and that, having failed in this from the start, she was using a woman's powerful weapon against him. The very thought filled his mind with anger towards the gentle one he was wronging so deeply; and he resolved that, come what would, he must be conqueror in the struggle, if the contest went on to the day of death! Thus he closed his mind to the possibility of ever comprehending her true feelings; and regarded every wail of anguish that went up from her bleeding heart, as the iron grasp in which he held it, grew daily tighter and tighter, as only the mad cry of a yet untamed spirit, in which the hope to rule was still a struggling passion! If she bore up calmly, yet sadly, seeking to perform every external duty faithfully in the sight of Heaven, he cherished anger against her, because she was not smiling and cheerful. If she sank down, as was not unfrequently the case, into impassive, dark, and gloomy states of mind, refusing even a word in answer to anything he might say—remaining thus, sometimes, for weeks together—he saw only a changing phase of her consummate art. It was fine acting! Under such a discipline, it is no cause of wonder, that, in many respects, the character of Mrs. Hardy under-

went a change; and that, even to her parents, she seemed at times to deport herself in a strange, if not unreasonable manner. As for her own conscious experiences, they were, as may be supposed, often of the darkest character. There were periods when reason tottered—when thought was a blank—when all around her was a bewildering maze, and she groped about like a blind man who has lost his way.

How often, oh, how often! in these hours of midnight-gloom, when it seemed as if the very sun that lit up the heaven of nature were fading, did she enter into her closet and shut the door, and pray unto Him who seeth in secret, beseeching Him for light to see by,—for strength to walk the rugged path she was treading,—for a willing heart to do her duty.

Sometimes she came from her closet, with a clearer mind and a stronger heart; and at other times with so crushed and hopeless a feeling, that her very life seemed perishing.

And so the days went on, the distance between herself, her husband, and happiness, growing ever wider and wider, the future growing darker and darker, and mocking hope flitting far in the distance, as a dusky image, in the form of death.

CHAPTER XIII.

The First-born.

"And there she has her young babe born,
And the lyon shall be lord of a'."

OLD SCOTTISH SONG.

THE birth of a daughter brought to Mrs. Hardy the dawn of a new day. But this day set ere long in darkness. Night followed quickly upon the morning. Mr. Hardy had his own views about children, and the little Helen was scarcely a week old, before he commenced laying down the formula of her home-education. Every word, every sentence, every proposition, sent a chill to the young mother's heart.

A year's close observation of her husband, under circumstances largely advantageous for a correct knowledge of his character, satisfied her as to one thing, that he had no tender feelings of his own, and no perceptions of the sources of mental suffering in others. That her child would inherit from her a high degree of sensitiveness to external impressions, tending, most probably, to a morbid development under wrong treatment, she

felt certain; and the yearning love, born with it in the mother's heart, took up at once its burden of sorrow for her child;—thus even while she clasped it in an ecstasy of maternal joy to her bosom, she prayed that it might not long be permitted to remain away from its better home among the angels.

The fears of Mrs. Hardy were not idle; and well she knew it. Not a month went by, before her husband commenced a meddlesome interference with her motherly duties; objecting to this,—proposing that,—reading constant homilies on the ignorance displayed by most women in regard to physiological laws,—and boldly declaring that his children should not be subjected to the murderous treatment by which thousands of little innocents were yearly swept into the grave. As before the birth of the babe, so after it, Mr. Hardy did not find in his wife any disposition to yield a ready acquiescence to his will. She entered into no contention with him, answered none of his propositions, combated none of his theories: but went on quietly to do for her babe, what love, duty, and the best information she could obtain prompted her to do. If what he proposed—which was too rarely the case—agreed with her own views of right, the thing was done; if it did not agree therewith, it was not done: and Mr. Hardy talked and scolded in vain. It was the same in regard to her mother, who under Mr. Hardy's plausible

representations, sometimes came over to his side. If Jane saw with them, well;—if not, she never followed their suggestions or commands.

Very mildly, though often firmly, did Mr. Hardy talk to his wife, when Mrs. Enfield was present, about her way of taking care of the little Helen. But when they were alone, he was far from being as gentle in manner, or as choice in his selection of words.

"Will you listen to reason, Jane?" How very imperative the tone in which he would thus address her, on finding that she would neither discuss a question touching the mode of dressing, feeding, or managing the babe, nor in any way modify her own nursery-discipline. Or he would say, in his impatience—

"I believe you would destroy the child's health rather than yield, in the slightest degree, to my wishes." Or—

"I will have none of this nonsense! The child is mine as well as yours; and my word, touching its welfare, must have weight!"

But all this availed little. Mrs. Hardy believed that she understood the babe's true character and wants much better than the father, and in nothing did she yield. His unkind words she bore with patience, though often they fell heavily upon her heart.

Up to its third month, the child had been very

healthy, not once requiring the attendance of a physician. On the subject of medicine, Mr. and Mrs. Hardy did not agree. In Mr. Enfield's family, the homœopathic treatment had been adopted, and their daughter had been used to it from childhood up to womanhood. Mr. Hardy, on the contrary, scouted at the new treatment as based on a tissue of absurdities, and altogether at war with his favourite common-sense. He had no more faith in a trituration or a dilution, than in so much pure sugar or alcohol.

In the choice of her own physician Mrs. Hardy firmly adhered to the medical faith in which she had been educated, and in the truth of which she had the strongest assurance. Mr. Hardy tried to reason with her on the subject; but she offered no arguments in return, simply adhering to her purpose. But, when it came to the question of a physician for the sick babe, the father was determined to have his own will, and an allopathist was called. Mrs. Hardy made no opposition beyond a simple pleading remonstrance. For herself she would have asked nothing; yet, for her babe, she would have humbled herself at his feet, could that have availed anything. But she had learned to believe her husband's oft-repeated words, "John Hardy never changes." And so she was passive.

The physician, a kind, gentlemanly, sympa-

thizing man, came at the summons, and found the babe ill, and in immediate need of attention. He had never seen Mrs. Hardy before, and was struck with her manner and appearance, but particularly with the singular way in which she received him. When he laid his hand upon the child, he could see that the mother shrank from him with a kind of dread, and that she was altogether ill at ease. Anxious to comprehend the meaning of this, he first sought by kind inquiries, and expressions of tender interest in the babe, to gain her confidence and he was in a measure successful. Then, after carefully noting all the symptoms, he spoke encouragingly, and predicted a speedy return to health.

"You will not give her very strong medicine, Doctor?" said Mrs. Hardy, with much anxiety in her tone.

"No, madam," he answered promptly; "infants cannot bear strong medicines."

"Don't trouble yourself about that matter, child," remarked Mr. Hardy, affecting a lightness of manner which he did not feel. "The doctor understands the case and its requirements, and will, with due caution, do everything that is needed."

The doctor now wrote a prescription which Mrs. Hardy read over eagerly, as soon as it was completed. She understood enough of it to be

aware that it was nauseous, and would have to be given every hour.

"You had better send for the medicine at once," said the doctor, speaking to Mr. Hardy. "The sooner we make an attack upon this disease, the sooner we may hope to dislodge the enemy."

"It shall be procured immediately," answered Mr. Hardy; "I will myself call at the druggist's, and see that it is here in less than twenty minutes."

At this moment, Mrs. Hardy's mind seemed to take a new interest in the case. She asked the doctor very particularly as to the character of the disease, and what parts of the body were most affected by it. The questions were answered with all the minuteness she seemed to desire.

As soon as the physician had left, Mr. Hardy's manner changed towards his wife, as it usually did after the departure of any visitor.

"I will send home the medicine immediately," said he, preparing to leave, "and be sure to give it according to directions."

Mrs. Hardy did not reply. Indeed she rarely made answer to any imperative requirement made by her husband.

Mr. Hardy stood looking at her for a few moments, fretted, as he usually was, at the seeming indifference of her manner, and tempted to utter some rebuke. He repressed the words that were on his tongue, however, and withdrew in silence

The moment he left the room, a new purpose seemed to awaken in the mind of his wife. An intelligent change passed over her countenance; her whole form arose from its shrinking attitude, and she leaned her head, listening to the sound of his footsteps. When she heard the street-door close, she called the nurse, resigned the babe to her, went from the nursery to the bed-room, and commenced a hurried preparation to go out.

By the time she was ready, a lad from the apothecary's came with the medicine. As soon as the preparation reached her hands, she thrust it into a drawer, with an expression of disgust on her countenance.

Going back to the nursery, she said to the attendant who had little Helen in charge—"Take good care of my precious one. I am going out; but I shall be back in less than half an hour."

The nurse could not help remarking an unusual glow on Mrs. Hardy's face, and an unusual brightness in her eyes.

From her own home, to the dwelling of the physician who had visited her father's family from earliest days which memory could recall, the young mother went with almost the fleetness of wind. Concealing all but the fact of her babe's illness, she gave the doctor so clear a statement of the case, that he could prescribe almost as intelligently as if the patient were before him.

On giving her the required medicine, he said—

"Perhaps I had better call in, during the day, and see if the remedy takes the requisite effect."

"No, Doctor," was answered. "I have reasons for not wishing you to call. After dinner I will come round again, and let you know what change has occurred in the symptoms. In the mean time, give me any hint you think needed in the observation of them."

The doctor reflected a moment, and then gave the directions she asked. Hurrying home, her heart fluttering with fear lest her husband, from some instinctive knowledge of what she was doing, should have returned during her absence, she entered, with glowing cheeks, the room where she had left her babe. The nurse looked up with an anxious countenance.

"Poor child!" she said almost tearfully. "How ill she is! Hadn't we better give her the medicine; it must surely be come?"

"Yes, it has been brought to me," remarked Mrs. Hardy, averting her face, so that its expression could betray nothing that was in her thoughts. "I will bring it in a moment." After bending down to look at her sick child, and kissing it, she went hastily to her room. Then taking the medicine prescribed by the visiting physician, she carried it to the nursery, and handing it to the attendant, said as she received the babe into her own arms—

'Mix this according to the directions, and bring it up when ready. It is to be given every hour."

The nurse took the packet of medicine, remarking to herself, as she did so, that not many mothers would trust another to prepare medicine for a sick babe, and went down stairs to obey the orders. The moment she had left the room, Mrs. Hardy drew forth a little packet of powders, and hastily opening one of them, dropped its contents into her infant's mouth. It was no offensive dose, for the lips of the sick babe were instantly compressed, and then moved as if a sweet morsel were on its tongue.

When the nurse returned, the mother was gazing anxiously on the child, yet with a new hope in her heart, born of her confidence in the attenuated remedies prescribed by the old family-physician. The attendant came forward, and stood before Mrs. Hardy, holding the cup of medicine, in expectation that she would take a spoonful of the sickening compound, and force it down the throat of the tender babe. Mrs. Hardy looked at its face for a few moments, and then said—

"Put the cup on the table; I will not disturb her just now, she seems to be sleeping."

"It is a good while since he doctor was here,' suggested the nurse,—"and the baby is very ill Isn't it risking too much to delay any longer?"

"I will not disturb her at present," replied Mrs. Hardy firmly. "She is asleep, and sleep is a great restorative."

"You can go down stairs," she added, after a little while. "When I want you, I will ring."

The nurse wondering at what seemed to her such singular conduct, obeyed the suggestion, and left the apartment. Not once was the babe out of its mother's arms from that time until Mr. Hardy's return at two o'clock. Every half hour during that period, she had given a powder, and now had the infinite satisfaction of seeing a marked improvement—so marked, that the father, as he bent anxiously over his first-born, felt a heavy weight of care taken from his bosom.

"Dr. Fairfax is a man of great skill," said he "His prescription is doing wonders. You may rest in the fullest assurance that all is safe in his hands. A very different state of things would now exist, had I been weak enough to yield to your prejudice, in favour of the silliest medical practice that ever deceived the people. Instead of this healthy change, our precious babe would now, in all probability, have been far out of the reach of human aid."

Mrs. Hardy offered no reply, but kept her face bent so low over the babe in her lap, that its expression was hidden from the eyes of her husband.

When the doctor called soon afterwards, he found a most encouraging change. The fever had entirely subsided, and every other symptom of disease was visibly abated. He congratulated the mother on the favourable turn things had taken, consequent on the curative action of the medicine prescribed.

Mrs. Hardy did not respond very warmly to this, nor did she seem at her ease. Naturally free from guile, and truthful from principle, this, almost the first instance of her life in which she had acted with duplicity, disturbed the quiet of her self-repose. She had deceived the doctor, and done what he would regard as a professional insult. And this being so, she could not assume towards him the pleased, familiar, confiding air his manner invited; but rather treated him with greater coldness and reserve than in the morning. The doctor was altogether at a loss to understand her. He had heard something said as to her being "peculiar;" and he was inclined to think that there might be some truth in the report.

"How much of the medicine is left?" he inquired, looking towards the mantel-piece, where the cup, in which it had been mixed, was standing.

"It is all gone," was answered. "I knocked over the cup a little while ago, and spilled every drop. But baby is so much better that I hardly think a new supply will be needed."

"I will repeat the prescription, making a slight change. You can send for it, and give a dose every three hours, instead of every hour, as at first."

The doctor departed, musing within himself on the peculiarity of Mrs. Hardy's conduct, and wondering what it could mean. "There is something behind all this," he said within himself—"something hidden below the surface, and out of the reach, at present, of my plummet-line. I must dive into the mystery."

Mrs. Hardy, while rejoicing over the escape and speedy convalescence of her babe, and feeling conscience-clear, so far as duty to her tender offspring was concerned, experienced a new sense of inward pain. A stern necessity, as she deemed it, had required her to do violence to one of the instinctive virtues of her nature. Truth was born with her, and truthfulness of conduct had ever marked her deportment from childhood upwards. But, in this thing, she had deceived her husband, and deceived an honourable, kind, and gentlemanly physician. How painful was the self-abasement, that assumed a morbid condition, and which increased the longer her thoughts dwelt on the recent hurried scene through which she had passed!

During the afternoon, Mrs. Hardy made another visit to the homœopathic physician, and received

an additional supply of powders. When her husband returned in the evening, and found the babe so much better that all fear on its account was entirely removed, his satisfaction was great, and he expressed his pleasure in the warmest manner. Mrs. Hardy seemed scarcely cheerful, and did not respond in a way that to him was satisfactory. Even greater than his was her rejoicing; but her pain of mind was great also, and shadowed her countenance. She had, in the performance of what she regarded as a mother's sacred duty, done violence to one of the higher instincts of her nature—and such violence is always followed by suffering.

"I am half inclined to believe that you are sorry the child is better," said Mr. Hardy, abruptly. (He always spoke severely to her now. The entire absence of any sign of feeling when he thus spoke with harshness, led him into the erroneous idea that she had lost the sensibility of former years, and that it needed a deep probe and a firm hand to find the region of pain. Most faithfully did he act up to this conviction.)

"Why so?" inquired Mrs. Hardy, lifting her quiet eyes to his face, and speaking in a voice that betrayed no emotion.

"Because the fact proves the value of the old and true system of medicine, and for ever silences your cavilling objections."

There was no change on the countenance of Mrs. Hardy, whose eyes dropped to the face of the babe that lay close to her bosom. But it was a mistake that she did not feel the unkindness of her husband's remark. She would have cared less, if she had not deceived him. That fact rested like a mountain upon her heart, and made deeper the shadows that never lifted therefrom their sombre curtains for a moment.

At this point in the sad history of her inner life, sickening doubts began to intrude themselves upon her mind: doubts as to the wisdom and goodness of that Divine Providence which she had been taught, from her childhood up, to regard as personal, and as extending even to the minutest particulars of life. Truth she loved and revered; a fact in her mental organization, which may serve to show how deeply she must have suffered under the false charge of "acting a part," so often alleged against her by her husband. The new trial into which she was brought by the sickness of her babe, with the seeming necessity that rested upon her of doing what was in contravention of her husband's wishes,—and that with a secrecy which to her involved duplicity,—enabled some evil spirit to throw into her mind a flood of doubts and wild questionings, and painfully to bewilder her hitherto clear perceptions.

Mr. Hardy having gained a triumph, as he

imagined, over his wife, and compelled her to have an old-school physician to attend to their sick babe, did not show himself a very generous conqueror; but kept referring to the fact over and over again, and in a way that was far from being agreeable. Mrs. Hardy did not reply to him in any case. But he saw that her countenance, when she fell into her usual state of abstraction, was more shadowed than usual; and he interpreted the meaning of this to suit his own false estimate of her feelings.

CHAPTER XIV.

Helen's Early Education.

"We pray you, throw to earth
This unprevailing woe; and think of us,
As of a father."—SHAKSPEARE.

FROM this time forward, new trials awaited Mrs. Hardy at almost every step in her troubled way through life. Her views of home-education by no means ran parallel with those of her husband; and her perceptions of her children's characters and wants were altogether different from his. He made rules for their government—from his intellect; while she perceived what was best for them—from the heart. He *thought* out a system of home-management, and decided from *reason* that it was right as applied to children in all cases, and of course right as applied to his own; any deviation, therefore, from this system on the part of his wife was met by complaint, remonstrance, or censure. Many of his rules and requirements were regarded by her as oppressive; others as cruel; and most of them as in direct antagonism to the wants of the children's nature. To carry them out

in all cases, she felt to be wrong, for strict execution of his laws would destroy in them those qualities, which, if nurtured and developed, would be in her estimation the crowning graces of their lives.

And so the years passed, with but little sunshine and many shadows for the heart of the unhappy wife and mother. In the eyes of her husband, she was still a rebel in heart against his just authority; and he, as to the beginning, neither forgave the opposition, nor yielded in anything to what he deemed whim or perverseness. All her sad states of mind—her days, and sometimes weeks, of gloomy prostration—he regarded as the struggles of an unbroken spirit, yet striving for the ascendancy.

The single instance given, wherein Mrs. Hardy deceived her husband, in order to save her babe from what she regarded the cruelties of an imperfect system of medicine, was but one of a thousand. Almost daily, for the sake of her children, did she act towards her husband with duplicity; and every such act laid a new weight upon her heart, until the pressure became more than she well knew how to bear.

During all this time, even while the ordeal through which Mrs. Hardy was passing was paling her cheeks, robbing her beautiful eyes of their lustre, wasting her form of perfect symmetry to a shadow, and shutting her up recluse-like at

home, her husband retained his sunny presence; and in all companies and at all times, save when alone with his wife, met friends and strangers in the most genial manner. As in former days, so was he still largely interested in the prosecution of general schemes of benevolence, and freely gave his money to sustain them.

Not having secured sunshine at home—the sunshine so much coveted and so much talked about at the commencement of his married life—he was more ready to give his evenings to board-meetings, public assemblies, and other convocations, at which he either presided, or appeared in some prominent position. In the eyes of most men, and most women also, he was a noble specimen of humanity; and when, at distant intervals, his wretched unhappy-looking wife, self-compelled, appeared with him abroad, people regarded her with wonder, and pitied her husband.

Seven years after the marriage of Mrs. Hardy, both her father and mother died, within the space of a single month. Her husband, as the sad separation drew near—and its occurrence was seen to be inevitable—awaited the consummation with considerable uneasiness, in expectation of its depressing effect upon his wife's mind. But the solemn hour of death came to both father and mother, and the daughter passed, tearless, with scarcely a sign of emotion, through the scene.

Even Mr. Hardy was moved by the sight, and wept at the visible tokens of mortality.

Friends and strangers looked on in wonder, and falsely judging the wronged, bewildered, suffering daughter, assumed that she was devoid of feeling; while her husband also permitted himself to draw partially the same conclusion.

What her real state of mind was, it would be difficult to describe. To herself, it was an appalling mystery, and she felt terrified as the thought of insanity intruded itself like the countenance of a mocking fiend.

"I have not much strength left, O Lord God of my fathers!" she prayed in hopeless anguish, yet praying from the very instinct of hopelessness and danger. "Stand by me, or I faint and fall by the way. Lead, oh lead me out of this bewildering maze. Show me the path of life."

And at this very time, Mr. John Hardy stood up, in spirit, and said—"I thank thee, O Lord, that I am not as other men!"

The world looked on, and, praising the pharisee, misjudged the unhappy publican.

Time moved on, with little change in the aspect of things. More children were born to the striving mother, and new duties laid upon her; until seven little ones gathered around her in childish innocence and beauty.

She was not a proud, nor a happy, but a loving

mother; sometimes a weakly loving, and a wrongly indulgent mother. But, all things considered, who can wonder at this? It would have been strange if it had been otherwise. Maternal love and duty now sustained her. As a wife, she had nothing to lift her up. All the twining tendrils, which, at the beginning, had shot forth, and with the instinct of a womanly heart, had laid hold of her husband's manly nature, inweaving themselves therewith, had slowly relaxed their clinging coils, letting the vine fall away, and droop to the earth, from which in its young life it had arisen joyfully. Had there been no mother's love, she must have died.

Long ere this, every vestige of true affection had perished in the hearts of both wife and husband, who now barely tolerated each other. The bond that still held them together was a threefold one:—love for their mutual offspring; a regard for appearances; and a sense of the binding force of their marriage-vows. But for one, or all of these, they would have been driven asunder, years before, with a strong repulsion.

The care of her seven children fully occupied Mrs. Hardy's time and thoughts, offering a valid reason for her declining to go into society, except at distant intervals, or on very special occasions. It was this care that sustained her. In the daily performance of duty, she found a measure of

strength; and in the love of her children, at times, a precious consolation.

Too frequently, however, the interference of her husband with her rule among the children, his opposition to her wishes in regard to them, and his custom of pursuing a line of discipline totally at variance with her's, robbed her of this only source of pleasure that remained to brighten feebly her gloomy way.

The first three children were daughters. When the oldest reached the age of fourteen, Mr. Hardy, finding that it was impossible to make his wife do just as he wished in regard to her, assumed the position, in his own mind, that the child would be ruined if suffered to remain at home So he took into consideration the scheme of sending her to a boarding-school; and after viewing the question on all sides, determined the matter affirmatively. The first intimation received by the mother, that he was even thinking upon the subject, came in the announcement of his settled purpose.

It was a long time since Mr. Hardy had seen his wife so moved. The proposition disturbed her more profoundly than anything that had occurred for years.

"No, John," she said, as soon as she could compose herself enough to speak calmly; "don't think of that. Helen must not be sent away.

Home is always the best and safest place for children."

"Not always," was the cold reply. "Helen will be ruined, if she remains at home."

"Ruined, John! How?"

"In many ways. I can see that she is changing for the worse every day. Do you require her to learn all her lessons correctly?"

"As far as it is in my power to attend to her. But, you must remember, that she is not the only one I have under my care."

"Just so. And that shows the necessity of her being placed in different circumstances, where she can be better trained than it is possible for her to be at home."

"Why not get a private teacher or governess?" suggested Mrs. Hardy.

"I don't believe in private teachers," was answered dogmatically. "Never knew one that was worth a copper. No, no. It is not a private teacher that Helen wants, but a new set of associations: and these I have made up my mind she *shall* have."

Powerless in the iron grasp of her husband had Mrs. Hardy felt for years. Opposition she knew to be hopeless; but passive, silent endurance was, in this case, no protection for her child. For herself, she never thought of beseeching any change in the stern, hard decisions which she had learned

to recognise as unalterable. She could endure; she could not cry out for mercy. But now another's happiness and well-being were at stake —even the happiness and well-being of her pre cious child, her first-born, who inherited, in a high degree, her own sensitive nature. The thought of sending her from home, sent a thrill of pain to her heart.

"Let me pray you, John," she said, in tones of pleading anguish, "to refrain from this. Helen is not the child to send away from home. Do not make her wretched!"

"She is just the child that needs to be sent away," was the unyielding reply; "and it is our duty to look to her future good. A few tears will do her no harm; and they will soon be dry. The grief of childhood is as the morning cloud and the early dew."

"You do not know her truly. Trust me, when I say that it will be doing a great wrong to send her from home to school. Oh, dismiss the thought at once from your mind; and if there is anything in which I can meet your wishes in regard to her, it shall be done cheerfully."

"You cannot help indulging her natural weak nesses and habits of indolence, and these, unless eradicated, will destroy her as a woman. Your imbecile yielding to every whim of your children, is ruining them as I have told you again and

again. But, all that I have said has gone for nothing; and now I take the matter into my own hands. By this time, you are probably aware, that I go through with whatever I undertake Helen has got to leave home. *That* I wish you to regard as a settled thing!"

Mrs. Hardy's heart, which had leaped and struggled with pain at her husband's announcement of his intention to send their eldest daughter away to school, now fell heavily, and almost pulselessly in her bosom. Her head drooped until her face was so hidden from her husband's eyes, that he could not see its expression; and there she sat, as her husband had seen her sit so many times, motionless as a statue—the very image of despair. Not the slightest wave of pity moved over his feelings, as he looked at his wife, nor was there in his mind the slightest change of purpose. Whatever he saw to be right, that he set himself to do, and with an unflinching purpose. He had reasoned himself into the clear conviction, that it was best for Helen to leave home, and from home she must go, if all the world were in opposition.

It was late in the evening, and they were alone. Mr. Hardy felt very composed, resolute, and well satisfied with himself. He had proposed to do only a plain duty—and to use his own words—"Duty with John Hardy was law." He had turned partly away from his wife, so that the unpleasant

aspect of her drooping, motionless form, might not offend his eyes; and, to appear indifferent to her state of feeling, had taken a newspaper in his hand, which he rustled most imposingly. For nearly a quarter of an hour he read over the news, all of which he had read before, and conned advertisements in which he felt not a particle of interest, momentarily expecting his wife to move from her fixed position. But she gave no indication of life or feeling.

"Jane!" He had arisen, and stood looking down upon her, with a kind of lordly, imperious air. She started at his voice, and fairly sprung to her feet,—looking for some moments, as if just awakened from a bewildering dream, and not yet able to distinguish between what was fantastic and what was real. Mr. Hardy had never before seen so peculiar an expression in her face; nothing so like the glare and distortion of insanity.

"Come," said he, "it is getting late." He moved a pace or two towards the door. But his wife did not stir from the spot where she was standing.

"Jane! This is folly! madness!" Mr. Hardy turned upon his wife, almost angrily.

The poor suffering woman struck her hand hard upon her forehead, and, holding it there tightly, looked up into her husband's cruel countenance with steady, intense, fiery eyes.

A slight shudder ran along his nerves, as she continued thus to gaze.

"John," said she, in a voice that was deeper and hoarser than any he had ever heard from her lips. "I warn you not to do this thing! I cannot part with Helen. She is my first-born; my very life is bound up in her; she is the warm sunshine upon my path. Don't separate us!"

"This is all idle—all selfish weakness," replied Mr. Hardy. "I am amazed at your folly!"

"John!"—there was no change in the quality of Mrs. Hardy's voice, except that it conveyed a deeper warning,—"there is always a point beyond which the strongest heart cannot sustain itself. I feel that mine is on the utmost verge of endurance. Spare me, then, my husband! Oh! spare me! Do not strike me down with this threatened blow. I shall surely sink to the earth, if it falls upon me."

The tremor of weakness was in some of the tones that uttered this sentence, while some of them were harsh and unnatural.

"Jane," was the slow, steadily spoken reply,—"as I have just said, I am amazed at all this. You talk as if I were a persecuting tyrant, and not a thoughtful father, seeking the good of his children, and firm in his purposes of duty. Spare *me*, I pray you!"

"O John!" How very sad, almost wailing,

was her voice, as she added—"Let me beg of you to stand still. Every step beyond the point where you now are, will be upon my heart. Your foot is very heavy; and the heel is shod with iron! Visit me with any other discipline—it matters not how severe—but spare me in this. Spare me; for my strength is not equal to the trial!"

"Jane Hardy!"—there was not the slightest sign of weakness in the husband's accents,—"I am not to be moved from a purpose which I know to be right, by any passionate appeals. Such things go for nothing with me—literally nothing!"

"Hard of heart, and cruel of purpose!" Another change in the mother's aspect was visible. The almost wild excitement into which this new assault upon her feelings had aroused her, died away in all its visible manifestations, and her face took again its almost stony expression. But there was a prophecy of coming evil in the eyes that were riveted upon the face of her husband with a look that sent a sudden chill along his frame. "God will judge between us! Again I warn you, in the sight of Heaven, not to send our child away! Evil will come of it; and on your head it will rest with a heavy curse."

"Let it come!" The cold, persistent character of John Hardy spoke in these few words. Pride left no room for pity or for change: "Let it come!" he repeated, that his firmness might the more

fully appear. "If I am not strong enough to bear all the evil you predict, let it crush me down!"

"Selfish and cruel to the last!" The eyes of Mrs. Hardy never turned for an instant from her husband's face, nor lost their weird expression. "You are a brave, bold man!" What a sharp, stinging scorn came suddenly into her husky voice. "A brave, bold man!" she repeated the words very emphatically, "to do battle for conquest with a weak woman, and a helpless child! A safe field for immaculate knight-errantry this! How proudly your trophies will be worn! All men will do honour to him who carries the shield of the broken heart!"

"Jane Hardy! Peace! Viper!" Mr. Hardy stamped his foot, and threw fiery and threatening glances upon his wife. But there was no change in her countenance or attitude.

"There will come for you, as there comes to every one, John Hardy, a day of reckoning! There is an Eye that sees into every heart,—a just God who rewards and punishes; the same God who said, two thousand years ago, as He says now, and will say for ever—'Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites!'"

"Peace, I say!" The heavy stroke of Mr. Hardy's foot, jarred the room, and rattled the pendants that glittered on the candelabras.

"Peace? Peace?" Mrs Hardy spoke in an

under-tone, as if to herself. "Long, long ago the rustle of her white garments was heard in departure. She will not come at your call, John Hardy!"

"Mad woman!" was retorted angrily.

A gleam shot across the face of Mrs. Hardy, as if the light of a torch had fallen upon it suddenly. It was paler the next instant.

"Mad woman!" repeated her husband, in blind indignation.

"Go your ways, John Hardy! Do your worst. Waste no pity on me. The utmost verge of endurance is at last reached, and visions of unconscious rest are floating in the distance. You have often said that you would bend me to your will, if I broke in the bending, and that there must be a submission on my part before there could be peace. If I had been a mere machine; if there had been no life in me, kindled from the life of God, and vital with freedom, the gift of God, I might have submitted long ago, and laid myself down upon the earth, feeling no pain when trampled upon. But it was otherwise. I had an individuality—a mental and moral organization—different from yours; a soul, God-owned, not husband-owned; a nature with instinctive wants, and capacities for joy or sorrow, independent even of its own volitions. I had no power to lay my hand upon my suffering heart, and say, 'Peace, be

still!' Too blind in his selfish pride to comprehend anything of this, was John Hardy. But let all that go with the rest. The husband's heart is dead. Yet if there is a living pulse in the father's heart, let it beat with something of a father's true feeling for his child. Do not send her away from home! Do not cloud her young life! Do not make the days weary and dark, that should be bright and warm with sunshine."

"Poor fool!" Yes, these were the cruel, heartless words that fell from the lips of Mr. Hardy, as he turned away in blind anger, and left the apartment.

CHAPTER XV.

Helen sent to School.

"To make them do, undo, eat, drink, stand, move,
Talk, think, and feel, exactly as he chose!
* * * * * *
The root from which it grew was Pride; bad root,
And bad the fruit it bore!"—POLLOK.

THE calmness of feeling that succeeds to sleep—the morning's clearer perceptions—the subsiding of passion through the lapse of time,—of all these had Mr. Hardy the advantage; and yet, there was born in his heart no softer feeling for his unhappy wife—no wavering in his purpose towards his child. To send the latter away from home he saw to be a plain duty; and no pity for the weakness or stubborn self-will of his long-enduring wife, stirred the hard surface of his heart.

On entering the family sitting-room, the next morning, a little scene met his eye, that would have melted the feelings of most men, but which only added another layer of ice to his. Mrs. Hardy sat with her youngest child in her lap, while Helen, the eldest, stood with her arm drawn

around her mother's neck, bending over and talking to the babe. Very tenderly did Helen love her mother, and very tenderly did she love the sweet young sister, who was as a sunbeam in their dwelling. All her pure life seemed bound up in theirs. Towards her father, Helen had never manifested a very strong affection. There was something about him that repressed the warm outgushing of her heart; and since she had become old enough to comprehend the meaning of certain things said and done by him to her mother, a feeling of alienation had found lodgment in her heart. A light of gladness was on her face, as she looked up, on hearing the footsteps of her father; but it faded instantly. There was an expression on his countenance that caused a low chill to run through her frame.

"Good morning, father!" she said, trying to smile, and struggling at the same time to dispel the feeling that came over her, like a cloud over the sun. Then she left her mother's side, and advanced a few steps to meet him.

"Good morning," was answered almost repulsively, as the father strode past his child; and, lifting the morning-paper from the table on which a servant had placed it, he sat down, and turned himself so much away from the other inmates of the room, that only a portion of his face could be seen.

Helen went slowly back to her mother, and drawing her arm around her neck, bent over the babe, and smiled upon it again. But even the babe felt the smile to be feebler, and gave back only a feeble smile in return. A shadow had fallen upon all their spirits.

For some minutes there was a stillness in the room that was oppressive. Even the younger children hushed their prattle, and the older ones looked half in wonder at their father.

"Helen," said Mr. Hardy, laying down the paper, not a single line of which had he read with any intelligent perception of its sense, and turning his face to where his daughter stood with her arms clasping her mother's neck—"come here; I wish to speak to you."

Helen, with a timid wondering look, came towards her father, and stood gazing upon his calm face, in which she saw the reflection of some fixed intention.

"Helen, in what I am now about to say, I wish you to believe me entirely in earnest. The matter is fully settled in my own mind, as a thing best to be done; and I expect your entire acquiescence."

Mr. Hardy spoke slowly, distinctly, and imperiously, his words falling like successive shocks upon the sensitive feelings of his child, whom he had taken entirely off her guard by this abrupt,

ill-timed introduction of a subject which he knew beforehand would be painful.

"I am going to send you away from home to school!" Helen started, and turned very pale.

"Oh, no! don't, father! Don't send me away to school!" she replied instantly, the tears gushing from her eyes.

"Helen! what did I say just now?" Mr. Hardy spoke sternly.

But Helen only stood still and wept.

"Answer me!" The father's voice was calm, but authoritative.

"O father! don't send me away from home I can't leave my mother."

Now that reason was the very worst of all that could have been urged.

"You have got to leave her," was almost angrily replied. "So make your mind up to that. You'll be ruined if you stay at home any longer."

"Mother! O mother! won't you say one word for me?" exclaimed Helen.

Mr. Hardy gave his wife a look, that, if he had possessed the power to do so, would have turned her into stone. But it did not seal her lips, for she instantly replied—

"It is not my will, Helen. I wish you to remain at home."

"Weak, perverse, injudicious mother!" exclaimed Mr. Hardy, in a manner more passionate

than he had ever before exhibited in his family. "I am tried beyond all endurance! Have all these years passed without your knowing me, that you now so madly throw yourself between my purposes and their certain execution? Your blindness and folly are amazing! I have already said to you that Helen must be sent away to school, and I want nothing on your part but accordant action. My word has gone forth, and it shall not fail!"

Helen uttered not a syllable, but went with slow steps from her father's side, and coming up to where her mother was sitting, threw her arms around her neck, and laid her face upon her bosom,—the entire group presenting an image of despair.

And what were Mr. Hardy's thoughts as he looked upon this picture? Did his heart soften? Was there even a slight relenting? These, or such as these, were his thoughts:—

"Was ever a man so thwarted in his purposes? Did ever a man, who wished to do right and be right, meet in his own home with such unreasonable opposition, and that too from a wife who made her solemn vows of love and obedience? What end have I in view? Simply the good of my child; and when I seek to attain that good, I am treated as an unreasonable tyrant. Shall I submit?—Shall I tamely yield?—Never! John

Hardy is not the man to be driven from his course by a woman."

The ringing of the breakfast-bell came just in time to prevent the utterance of some very strong language meditated by the incensed husband and father. The gathering at the table was a very embarrassed one. All the children, except the youngest, comprehended the meaning of what their father had said, and were in grief for their sister. The cloud which had fallen on her spirit shadowed theirs.

Nothing more was said on the subject during the meal; indeed, there was hardly a word spoken by any one. Mr. Hardy was first to leave the table.

True to his intentions, the unyielding father spent nearly all the forenoon in making inquiries from persons likely to be well informed on the subject, relative to various boarding-schools for young ladies. Some with whom he conversed, spoke strongly against the practice of sending daughters away from home for purposes of education, giving it as their opinion, that more evil than good came of it in nine cases out of ten. Their opinions, being adverse to his own designs, went for nothing. The views of some others ran quite parallel with his, and by these he was strengthened and encouraged.

Satisfied, at last, in regard to one of the schools about which inquiry had been made, he wrote to

the principal for more particular information. In three or four days he received an answer, with terms, favourable statements in regard to the institution, and a list of influential names for reference. The school was two hundred miles away. Several of the parties referred to occupied prominent positions in the community, but lived in distant cities, so that a personal application to them was out of the question. It did not occur to Mr. Hardy, that it might be well to write to one or two of these, and make some more minute investigations. Any good school was, in his opinion, preferable to the existing home-education; and the fact that these gentlemen had permitted their names to be used as referees, was altogether conclusive that this institution was of the highest order. So Mr. Hardy wrote back that he would, in a short time, send or bring his daughter.

"There is too much weak self-indulgence at home," he wrote. "An invalid mother, with morbidly sensitive feelings, is not calculated to give the right tone to her children's minds. She may be loving toward them, and devoted in her care: but she cannot be wise in discipline. Their sensibilities may develope under such a rule, but what is gained here is more than lost in enfeeblement of character. Daily have I seen the evil effects of this state of things upon the mind of my

eldest daughter, and I have now determined to remove her from influences that, if continued, will spoil her as a woman. I have a great dislike to your one-sided characters—to your men and women who are nothing except in a single direction. The well-balanced mind is the true one. Its possessor belongs to the happiest and most useful class in the community. I wish you to give my daughter a good training; to depress the over-matured feelings, and to encourage the intellect and reason; to teach her to think and to endure. This weeping at a word, and starting at the hum of a beetle, all appear to me humiliating weaknesses; and I confess to having no patience with them. It is the fact of their encouragement, rather than repression, at home, that has determined me to remove my daughter from such enervating influences. I shall therefore expect, from the very beginning, a firm course of treatment. The hot-house plant must grow stronger at the root and along the stem, that it may put out vigorous branches; and this it can never do, while it remains in the warm, pulseless air of a sheltered conservatory. I shall rely upon your firmness and your judgment in the case."

A week of entire silence on the subject which had so agitated the home-circle, and thrown over all hearts therein the shadow of a cloud, was

suffered to pass away; and then Mr. Hardy announced the fact that he had made arrangements to send Helen from home, and that she must be ready in a fortnight to enter the "Hope Institute for Young Ladies," situated in a quiet village of New York.

What his daughter suffered then, and afterwards, in consequence of this coldly calculated and as coldly executed purpose, Mr. Hardy never knew, and never could know. Her's was a nature, the comprehension of which was wholly above the region of his perceptions. His own emotional character gave him the only standard by which to judge of others; and this was so sluggish in its original constitution, and so obtuse through selfishness, that all feeling in those around him he regarded as a species of contemptible weakness. In the world, his love of reputation made him put on an appearance mild and amiable, like that of one possessing a warmly benevolent heart; but at home, he trode ruthlessly upon all weak exhibitions of sensibility.

As was just said, Mr. Hardy had no adequate conception of what his gentle, loving-hearted, sensitive child, who possessed in a high degree the delicate and refined organization of her mother, would necessarily endure in her rough removal from home, and as rough transplantation in a colder, harder soil, and an ungenial atmosphere

The life of Helen was so bound up in the life and love of her mother, that no separation could take place without the acutest suffering. She had always been shy towards strangers, and never cared to go out unless accompanied by her mother These were defects that needed to be overcome, but in the wisest and gentlest manner. To crush them out, as was now her father's purpose, was an impossible thing, without destroying the child's life; and the effort to do so involved cruelties, which it makes the heart sad to think of. There was no way in which he could rightly have accomplished the work of giving her character more strength, but by attaching her to himself through loving acts, and then under the shelter, or within the circle of his love, bearing her out into the world, and letting her timid nature gain confidence. If the home-influences were too enervating, if they developed her character in a one-sided manner, it was for him, gently and lovingly, to bring her within the circle of other influences, and to let her breathe by degrees a more invigorating atmosphere. But conciliation towards weaknesses of character, as he regarded them, was no part of John Hardy's home-discipline. His pride would never let him bend to that. What he, in his self-intelligence, decided to be right, that must be done; opposition only created impatience, and made his original purposes as unbending as iron.

CHAPTER XVI.

Helen Returns Home.

"Disasters come not singly,
But as if they watch'd and waited,
Scanning one another's motions;
When the first descends, the others
Follow, follow, gathering flockwise
Round their victim, sick and wounded;
First a shadow;—then a sorrow,—
Till the air is dark with anguish."—LONGFELLOW.

The first letter received by Mr. Hardy from the principal of the school to which Helen was sent, or rather taken by her father, had in it this sentence:—

"So far we have been unable to gain any encouraging access to the mind of your daughter. It is just one week since you left her here, and she has scarcely tasted food, or ceased weeping, during the whole time. I am afraid that she will become seriously ill."

Within this letter, which gave the darker shade of the picture, was contained another in which Helen was spoken of as getting on tolerably well, and becoming daily better pleased with the change. This was for the mother's eyes! How the consistent, truth-loving John Hardy reconciled this

duplicity with his strong sense of right, is a problem we will not stop to solve. His answer was on this wise. We take only a few sentences from his letter :—

"Time and perseverance accomplish all things. The state of my daughter's mind only illustrates what I said to you concerning the morbid development of her character under a one-sided home-influence. You see, that she has scarcely any endurance, self-reliance, or self-denial. A few years longer under the old state of things, and she must have been totally ruined. Be firm with her. Do not abate a single iota in the rule of conduct required. This discipline may be painful, but it must be salutary. I think you may rest satisfied of one thing, that her external condition is more grievous than her internal state. I will not call her artful; but I am quite ready to believe, that, in order to work upon all our feelings, she will assume quite as much as she endures, and a great deal more. Be patient with her for a little while, and all will come right."

A week later, and the principal of the institute wrote :—" I cannot say that there is any change for the better. Helen, it is true, comes into her class, studies the lessons we assign her, and manifests a willingness to comply with all the rules of the school. But a smile has never been seen on her sad face; and in no instance has

any one entered her room, when she was alone there, without finding her in tears. I am afraid of the effect which this forced removal from home may have upon her health."

"I will take the responsibility as to her health," wrote back Mr. Hardy. "She will tire of weeping in the end. The fact that she is giving her mind to her studies, I regard as an encouraging one. It is to increased mental activity that I look for the beginning of a salutary change. As her thoughts become more and more engaged with the realities presented in her lessons, sentimental feeling will subside. I am encouraged."

Helen wrote every week to her mother: this was as often as the father would permit. The letters came through his hands, and were suppressed. A single paragraph, extracted from the first of these, will show their tenour, and the state of mind in which she wrote:—

"I am trying to be patient, and to study. Everybody is kind to me, and everybody seems to pity me. I am very unhappy. O mother! dear mother! Can't you come and see me? I would give the world to look into your face again, and feel your arms around my neck. Ask father to let you come. Tell him that if he will just let you visit me once, I shall be a great deal better afterwards. Oh, it seems to me as if I should die, if I do not see you."

Mr. Hardy crumpled the letter in his hand impatiently, and threw it into the fire.

"Die!" he muttered, half in contempt. "How soon the girl puts on the woman! Women are always going to die, if things don't shape themselves to their wishes. But dying is not so easily accomplished!"

Two, three, four, five weeks went slowly by, dragging to the heart-sick child their weary train of hours along; and, in all that time, there came not a single line or token from her mother. Her father's letters, filled with good advice, and written quite as much for the eyes of the principal of the school as for her own, came regularly, but they had not a word in them about her mother. Rendered desperate at last, the poor child wrote these brief words to her father:—

"I am coming home. I do not wish to disobey you, and therefore shall not wait for you to forbid my coming. You can punish me in any manner that you think I deserve. But no punishment is so fearful to think of as what I now endure.

HELEN."

Two days after this letter was written, Helen stood on the threshold of her father's house, and on being admitted by the astonished servant, rushed wildly up-stairs, calling out,—"Mother! Mother! Dear mother! Where are you, mother?"

But the mother's voice answered not Into the

nursery she burst, with the word "Mother!" flung eagerly from her lips. There were all her sisters and brothers, and a strange but matronly-looking woman sitting among them.

"Oh, Helen!" exclaimed the sisters in surprise, starting forward to meet her.

"Where is mother?" cried the bewildered girl. "Oh, where is mother?" A sudden pallor overspread her face.

"Your mother is not here," said the strange woman, rising and coming towards Helen.

"Where is she?" A wild, demanding emphasis was in the young girl's voice.

"Mother is ill, and they took her away from here last week," said one of the younger children.

There was a meaning in this answer instantly comprehended, and with a cry of anguish, that chilled the heart of the stranger, Helen fell backwards. The woman caught her in her arms, ere her form struck the floor.

Mr. Hardy was sent for instantly,—also the family-physician. The anger of the former, when he saw Helen at home, was stronger than his pity, and stronger than his alarm at the condition in which he found her. He had not really believed her threat. The serious air of the physician, and the grave, searching nature of his queries, soon changed the character of Mr. Hardy's feelings. Dr. Fairfax pressed upon him question after ques-

tion in regard to Helen's state of mind at school, as well as the causes of her sudden return against the wishes of her father; and did it so closely and rapidly, that considerably more was admitted by Mr. Hardy than he liked to own, or than he would have owned, if he had not been thrown off his guard.

"This is a serious matter," remarked the physician, as he sat looking anxiously into the thin, death-like face of the child. "Helen is of too sensitive an organization to come into rough contact with the world, or to bear any sudden shocks Did she know of her mother's illness?"

"Not a word, until now," was answered.

The physician asked no more questions, but set himself earnestly to the work of restoration. In about an hour, Helen was so far recovered as to recognise her sisters. Returning consciousness was followed by violent weeping.

Mr. Hardy had been taken from the room by the doctor, so soon as signs of life were observed; and, when they were alone, the latter said—

"As far as I am able to understand your daughter's case, it appears that she has left school without your consent, and returned home; and this while in entire ignorance of her mother's unhappy condition, the first intimations of which, on her arrival, so shocked her feelings as to produce a state of unconsciousness. Now, justly

displeased as you may be on account of her disobedience, let me caution you not to say anything on the subject at present. There is no calculating the mental injury she may already have sustained; and if you add to her sufferings the smart of your displeasure, the worst consequences may follow Poor child! To what a sad consciousness is she now returning!"

Mr. Hardy promised all that the physician required. The serious tone and countenance with which the latter had admonished him, forced into his mind some unpleasant convictions. Doubts also intruded themselves. He might have been too rigid in the execution of his purposes. But he had "meant all for the best."

When the doctor returned to the chamber where he had left Helen with her attendants, he went in alone,—Mr. Hardy, at his request, remaining behind. She was so far restored as to recognise him instantly; and her first words, as he bent over her, were:—

"Does father know that I am here?"

"Yes, he knows it."

"Tell him not to send me back to school, Doctor, will you?" She spoke in an imploring voice, and raised nerself partly from the pillow as she spoke. "I can't go there again,—I would rather die!"

"He will not send you back, Helen," replied the doctor confidently.

"He is very angry with me; I know he is!' she whispered, looking with a terrified countenance towards the door. "But I couldn't help coming home, Doctor. I wanted to see my mother so much —my mother, from whom not one word had come to me from the hour I left her! O Doctor! where is she? Tell me! for I must know!" And her eyes glanced wildly about the room.

As best he could, the doctor soothed and assured her; and then commanded absolute repose and silence. But how easy to command these!—how fruitless, at times, the command! As well might we say to the heart, "Cease your pulsations, and yet give life to the body!" Helen could not rest —could not be silent. "Where is my mother? Tell me of my mother!" This was her incessant cry.

"Your mother has been very ill," said the doctor. But for this, she would have written to you."

"Why did they not tell me of it? Why did they not send for me?" she demanded, in so firm and self-possessed a voice, that the doctor looked at her thin, pale, almost child-like face, with surprise.

"You could not have helped her by your presence. It was, therefore, thought wisest not to distress you by the painful intelligence."

"Where is she now?"

The doctor was silent

"Is she in the house?"

"No."

"In the Asylum?"

"My dear child!" said the kind doctor, laying his hand upon the excited girl, and gently bearing her back upon the pillow from which she had arisen, "this must not be! You do yourself great harm. Wait until you are better and stronger,—then I will answer all your questions."

"I shall never be better nor stronger, Doctor, until the questions *are* answered," was the firm reply. "Is my mother in the Asylum?"

"She is."

A quick shudder ran through the poor girl's frame: and her white face turned to a more deathly hue. Her dark lashes fell slowly upon her cheeks, hiding the glassy lustre of her eyes. The hands, lying across her bosom, drew together; and the fingers united in a firm clasp, as of one in prayer And she did pray, for the lips moved in the sight of those who looked tearfully upon her. For a long time, there was no change in her position; but a visible change slowly passed over her countenance. It became more tranquil. At last, unclosing her eyes, she looked up to the doctor, who still remained at the bedside, and said in a low, steady voice—

"I will do all that you require." Then drawing his head down, she whispered—

"Be my friend, Doctor. Oh! be my friend!"

"Trust me, dear child," replied the physician, moved by this appeal. "I am, and will be, your true friend."

"How is she, Doctor?" asked Mr. Hardy calmly, as the physician came from the sick chamber.

"She is in a quiet, and, I trust, promising condition. If all disturbing causes are withdrawn, we may hope for a speedy recovery."

"I am afraid, when she learns all the truth about her mother, that the effect will be injurious."

"She has already guessed the truth."

Mr. Hardy sighed deeply.

"Let me advise," said the doctor, "your entire silence on this, and every other subject calculated to disturb her mind. Leave her entirely in my hands, and trust, as far as you can, to my judgment in her case. There is mental as well as bodily sickness, and a true physician should minister to both."

"She is in your hands," replied Mr. Hardy, almost meekly. "I trust you with the fullest confidence."

When the doctor came the next morning, he was surprised to find Helen sitting up, and looking, except for her pale face, but little like an invalid. Two of her sisters, and the stranger before mentioned, were in the room

"I wish to see you alone, Doctor," said Helen, a little while after his entrance. Those who were in the room with them took the hint, and retired. There was a womanly self-possession about the slender girl that astonished the physician.

"I have asked no questions of any one about my mother," she began, "since I received from you, yesterday, the information I sought. Now, I wish you to tell me all about her. The cause of her affliction I believe I know."

"Do you?" The physician's face lighted instantly. "Then I ought to know it also; for on that knowledge, almost solely, may depend her cure. Speak to me freely, my child."

"We should never have been separated, Doctor. We cannot live apart. If she suffered all that I suffered, weak as she was at the time I was forced away, I do not wonder at the dreadful consequences."

"Could that have been the cause, Helen?" The doctor seemed half incredulous.

"If you had seen my mother's face, as I saw it, when I looked upon it last, you would not doubt for a moment. We should never have been separated. But I say this only to you, Doctor. Father was wrong—he was hard—he was cruel; but only in your ears do I speak this; and it is for your ears alone. He meant right,—father meant right. But tell me how she is?"

"Her mind has sadly wandered," said the doctor. "About a week after you went away, I was sent for, and found her in a strange condition. She had not slept, they told me, for a great many nights. There was a wild look in her eyes, and she had a rambling way of talking. She was dressed as if to go out, with the exception of not having on a bonnet; and she told me, in a confidential way, that she had been made a prisoner in the house by your father, and that she knew he wished to kill her, and would do so unless she could get away. I did all I could to quiet her fears; and for her sleepless condition, I prescribed powerful anodynes. On the second day sleep came, and she remained under the influence of morphine for three days. But her mind was yet astray. There still remained the idea that she was a prisoner, and her life in danger. About two weeks ago, she was discovered in the act of leaping from a window. I advised that she should be immediately removed to the Asylum, which was done."

"How is she now?" asked the eager listener, as soon as the doctor ceased speaking.

"Not as well as I could wish; yet, for the most part, she is in a tranquil state."

"Doctor,"—Helen's manner was firm—"I must go to her, and remain with her"

The doctor shook his head.

"Don't say, No:" she spoke with pleading earnestness. "The first wrong step was in our separation;—that must be retraced. Let us begin here, if we would begin right. There is no other hope."

The doctor looked at the young girl, as her form seemed to rise into womanly dignity, with a feeling of amazement and admiration. Conviction forced itself upon his mind. He saw that she was right.

"We must wait a few days until you are stronger," said he; "the trial will be severe."

"Fearful consequences hang on every hour," replied Helen firmly, and with a maturity of expression that more than ever surprised the doctor. "There is not a moment to be lost. I am as strong for this duty to-day, as I shall ever be—nay, stronger."

"I must consult your father."

"He will not consent, and the matter will only be made worse."

The physician pondered for some moments. He saw, he felt, that Helen was right; yet his slower judgment came but tardily to the approval.

"Do you think you are strong enough to bear this trial?" he asked, with manifest concern.

"Stronger to bear that than to endure a single hour's absence from my dear, dear mother! O

Doctor! take me to her at once I feel as if my heart would burst with impatience!"

The good physician hesitated no longer, but gave his consent; and, as soon as Helen could be made ready to accompany him, took her in his carriage, and drove her out to the Asylum.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Asylum.

Oph. "I hope all will be well. We must be patient, but I cannot choose but weep. . . . . I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good-night, ladies; good-night, sweet ladies; good-night, good-night."

Kg. "Follow her close: give her good watch, I pray you.
Oh! this is the poison of deep grief!"—SHAKESPEARE.

SOMEWHAT to the doctor's disappointment, Helen was silent and abstracted all the way. He wished to give her many directions, and to suggest many cautions. He expected her to refer to him, and ask instruction as to the best way of accosting her mother, and the best way of dealing with her; and he had thought out what seemed to him a judicious course of conduct. But while he waited for her to inquire of him, she was inquiring of a safer and wiser teacher, by lifting up her heart in silent prayer.

Up the long avenue of trees leading to the "Asylum," the doctor's carriage passed, and he was at the entrance-gate without having made any arrangement with Helen as to the manner in which they should approach her mother.

"I will visit her first," said the doctor, as he conducted Helen into one of the ante-rooms. "You remain here, while I see the matron and ascertain what is her present state of mind."

"Does she know you?" asked Helen.

"Yes, and talks to me very sanely sometimes."

"Then she will know me!" Helen's face brightened.

The doctor left her, but soon returned to bring word that her mother was sleeping. The matron said that she had been unusually restless all the morning, and had wept a great deal, mentioning, for the first time, the name of her daughter Helen, and complaining that she had deserted her like all the rest of her friends.

"I will go to her, and remain with her alone until she wakes," said Helen.

The doctor looked doubtful, and appealed to the matron.

"Do not say, No!"

The matron gazed with something of wonder upon the slender girl.

"Do not say, No!" repeated Helen. "Take me to my mother, and leave me alone with her."

"It may be best," said the matron; and she conducted Helen to the room where the invalid lay in a deep sleep. One look at the changed, wan face, buried deep in the pillow, caused tears to blind Helen's eyes, and wet her cheeks. The

impulse to throw herself upon her mother's bosom, and cover her lips with kisses was so strong, that she could with difficulty restrain herself. How full was her heart of yearning love—of tenderness —of pity! How all the affections of her soul went out to this dear mother! But self-control was maintained. Love made her strong. After gazing upon that beloved form for some time in silence, she turned aside; and, removing her bonnet and shawl, smoothed back her hair, and made preparations to remain with her mother. After a few whispered words, the matron retired, and left her alone with the sleeper.

How very rapidly had Helen grown old in the last few days! From a weak, suffering girl, yearning to fly back to her mother's side, that she might bury her face in her bosom, feel her protecting arms around her, and hear the tones of love fall once more on her ears, she had changed almost into a thoughtful woman. The clinging vine had suddenly gained strength, and was now offering, instead of claiming support. As she sat looking upon the face of her mother, she did not revolve in her thoughts the words best to be spoken when the deep slumber now locking up the external senses should break, and the soul look forth again upon the outer world. She left it all for the time when words were needed. Her heart would be the wisest prompter.

For nearly half an hour, Helen kept her place by the sleeper, scarcely moving the whole time. At the end of this period, there were signs of restlessness. These subsided, and all was still again. Helen had turned from the bed, and stood gazing from the window, when a movement caused her to look round. The eyes of her mother were open. What a thrill went along every nerve! Neither spoke; but their eyes rested on each other with something of a mutual fascination. Helen felt, for a few moments, as if she had lost the power to breathe.

Slowly the mother rose up in bed, still keeping her eyes upon her daughter's face, with something of curious wonder in the expression of her own.

"Helen!" The name was uttered in a low whisper. "Helen!" she repeated, as her face came nearer to the face of her child.

It was almost superhuman self-control that enabled Helen to repress the impulse which would have led her to throw herself, with a wild exclamation, upon her mother's breast.

"Dear mother!" She spoke in a whisper, and very, very calmly. Love gave her the wisdom to perceive what to do, and the power to act right.

What a gleam of joy was flung into the mother's face, as the tones of her child, even in a faint

whisper, entered her ears, and were recognised by her heart.

"Helen! Helen! dear Helen Oh, is it indeed my precious one?"

"Dear, dear mother!"—Helen still maintained her self-control;—"I am with you again; and will always be with you."

"Not here! no, not here!" And shadows fell over the mother's face. "They won't let you stay here."

"Then I will take you away," said Helen, firmly; "for I am never going to leave you any more."

"Oh, I'm so glad!—so glad!" And light returned to the mother's countenance.

Helen kissed her lips tenderly, but not with the wild impulse that was in her heart; and said—

"I am to be your nurse until you get well; the doctor says so."

"Did he? I'm so glad!—so glad!" repeating her words with a kind of childish delight.

"Yes; that is all arranged: and I'll make you such a good nurse. Oh! you shall be well in a little while."

With an instinct beyond her years, the daughter had understood her mother's true state, and with a wisdom and self-command equally beyond her years, had met that state in the right manner and with the right words.

"I've been very ill since I saw you, dear. I don't know what's been the matter with me,—but, I've been very ill. I'm getting better now, and the doctor says I shall soon be well again."

"Oh, yes, you are a great deal better," replied Helen, with smiling encouragement; "and, as I am to be your nurse, you will grow better very fast." A shower of kisses followed the words.

"I want no other medicine. Your kisses will make me well," said the mother, light playing again over her countenance.

"As I am now your nurse, I must enjoin freedom from all excitement," remarked Helen, gently pressing back the form of her mother, until her head rested upon the pillow from which she had arisen. "And you will be, I know, the best of patients."

Mrs. Hardy made no resistance. Indeed, the little authority assumed by her daughter rather pleased than annoyed her. From the curious way in which she looked up into her face, it was plain that some thoughts of a puzzling character were flitting through her mind. "I don't know why you stayed away so long," she at length remarked.

"They wouldn't let me come. That was the reason," replied Helen.

"Who wouldn't let you come?"

Now this was a question which Helen felt it

difficult to meet; for the answer might do harm. So she remained silent.

"Oh, well, you needn't say who it was. I know all about it. It isn't right for children to speak against their father. He's your father, dear; and the Bible tells us to honour our parents. Yes, it was his work. I know all about it. He tried to kill me; but God wouldn't let him."

The blood seemed to grow cold in Helen's veins, as she listened. But she commanded herself, and replied in a soothing voice—

"We won't think any more about that, mother; it will only make us feel unhappy. The doctor is on our side; and he won't let anybody separate us again.

At this moment, Helen's glance fell upon a Bible; and, almost without thinking, she said—

"I used to read to you out of the Bible, when I was a little girl. Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes, I remember." The shadows were instantly gone from Mrs. Hardy's face.

"Shall I read to you again?" Helen stepped across the room, and brought back the Bible in her hand.

"Yes, love."

Helen opened the book; and, in a low, reverent voice, read one of the beautiful parables of our Lord. Mrs. Hardy listened with earnest atten

tion, and when her daughter paused, looked up and said—

"Read on, dear."

For nearly twenty minutes, Helen sat and read from the Holy Book, her mother lying all the while as still as a sleeping infant. The doctor and the matron, anxious to know the effect of Helen's presence upon her mother, had several times come near the door, and gained some idea of what was passing without giving any sign of their presence. They returned again at this period, and both were much affected by what they saw and heard. Retiring noiselessly, they consulted as to what was now best to be done. The doctor's time was limited; and it was impossible to remain any longer without neglecting patients who needed his attention; but yet both deemed it unwise at present to intrude upon Helen and her mother. It was finally concluded, that the doctor should return to the city, and come out again late in the afternoon.

Half an hour afterwards, the matron went to see how Mrs. Hardy was going on. She found her walking up and down the room, with Helen leaning upon her arm.

"Good morning!" said Mrs. Hardy, smiling cheerfully. "You see I have a visitor,—my daughter!"

"Good morning, dear!" returned the matron,

advancing, and taking the hand of the young girl. "I am happy to meet you; and hope you have come to spend some time with us."

"Oh, yes; she's going to stay," said Mrs. Hardy, quickly. "Helen is my eldest daughter," she added, fondly bending down and looking into her face. "She's been away from home, and has just returned. Isn't she a dear girl?"

"Indeed she is," replied the matron; "I don't wonder that you are proud of her. You must take her round and show her our beautiful place. There isn't a lovelier spot anywhere."

"Oh, yes, I'm going to show her everything," said Mrs. Hardy. "It will be so delightful!"

Pleased at the suggestion, Mrs. Hardy called for a hood, and in a few minutes was out in the garden, with Helen leaning on her arm. For nearly two hours they sat or walked amid the flowers, trees, and shrubberies, the mind of the invalid interested all the while in pointing out new beauties to her daughter. At the end of this time, some remark dropped by Helen made the mother's thoughts revert to her little children at home, and all the yearning love of her soul quickened into instant life. Tears began to rain down her cheeks, and sobs to convulse her bosom.

"We must go home, Helen," said she, with so firm a purpose in the tone of her voice, that Helen's heart began to tremble. "I have been

away from the children a long time, and it is not right. I wonder where the doctor is? He brought me here this morning, and left me while he went to see some patients in the house. He is spending a long time with them. Come! let us go in, and see what detains him."

"He has, I believe, gone back to the city,' Helen ventured to say; "but he will be out again before evening. He had some patients there that needed to be seen."

"Gone back to the city!" Mrs. Hardy looked confounded. "That is strange conduct! I don't understand it."

There was no vacancy in her countenance, but an earnest displeasure.

Greatly to Helen's relief, she saw the matron approaching them, and said with some presence of mind—

"Let us ask this lady about the doctor." The matron came up, and Helen managed to convey to her a look and gesture of warning.

"I don't exactly understand this, madam," said Mrs. Hardy. "My daughter tells me that Doctor Fairfax has returned to the city."

"He has; but will soon be back again," was replied in a polite, rather deferential manner, as if she were speaking to a stranger.

"It was very wrong in him, and I am seriously displeased My children will be in trouble about

my long absence. Is there not any way for me to get back to the city before he finds it convenient to return?"

"None, I believe, madam. Our carriage is away, and will not be back till evening."

"It is too bad! I don't see what the doctor means by taking this liberty with me."

"He thought you would enjoy a few hours in this delightful place," said Helen; "and as he had to go back to the city very soon, he did not wish to hurry you away. He will make it all plain enough when he returns, you may be certain."

"Doctor Fairfax is something of an oddity, you know," remarked the matron; "and often takes professional liberties with his patients. You have been on the invalid's list for some time, and have confined yourself too closely at home, with your children. Change, fresh air, country sights and sounds, the doctor thought indispensable; and so he has cheated you into their enjoyment for a few hours. It was something of a liberty, I must admit; and I would scold him well for it. But now that you are in this pleasant place, with so much light and beauty around you, it would be as well to act the part of wisdom, and draw from them health of mind and body."

"Just what I would say, dear mother!" joined in Helen. "The children will do well enough

Let us enjoy this beautiful country scenery, and these delicious odours. Are not the garden-walks delightful; the flowers pleasant to look upon; the cooling shadows of these great trees like blessings of peace from heaven?"

Mrs. Hardy turned to her daughter with a look of wonder, and said—

"Why, Helen dear, you talk like a grown-up woman, instead of a girl!"

"Do I?" She smiled lovingly upon her mother. "It is the scene that has inspired me."

"I wish I could see everything in as beautiful a light as you do, my dear. But I see only the children at home, from whom it seems as if I had been parted for an age; and I only desire to return to them. How soon will the doctor be back?"

She turned with an anxious look to the matron.

"In about an hour."

"An hour! an hour!" she repeated the words. "Well, it was not right, and I am very much displeased with him."

"Won't you come in and take some refreshment?" said the matron; "you have been walking here for a long time, and must be fatigued."

"Yes, dear mother," urged Helen. "I feel tired and hungry, and I know that you must be over-wearied."

"Come," said the matron, turning towards the house.

Helen leaned with a slight onward impulse upon the arm of her mother, who made no objection, and they re-entered the building.

A table was set, under the direction of the matron, and dinner served to Mrs. Hardy and her daughter. Before the meal was ended, the doctor arrived. Being informed of the change in his patient's state of mind, he deemed it best, on consideration, to go in upon her unannounced, and decide, after an interview, whether it would be best to take her home, or leave her at the Asylum. A single glance at her changed countenance told him that the light of reason had dawned once more, though it burned yet only with a feeble flame. She scolded him severely, saying that she was seriously offended at his conduct, and insisted upon his taking her home immediately.

It was necessary, the doctor saw, to make his decision on the instant. He looked into Helen's face, and read her desire for his acquiescence. This turned the scale, and he said promptly—

"I must excuse myself, by saying, madam,"—he spoke in a tone of apology,—"that I thought a couple of hours in this pleasant place would do you more good than all my medicine. But come, my carriage is waiting, and I will drive you home in the quickest possible time."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Baffled Purposes.

"If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
To drop the axe?—Soft! pause we there
. . . . . yon [maid] may tell
The tale; and Fairfax loves [her] well.
Else wherefore should I now delay
To sweep this [hindrance] from my way?"—Scott.

After bringing Mrs. Hardy back to her home, and seeing that her mind, though still not entirely clear, continued in its improved condition, the doctor went on to her husband's place of business, and informed him of the favourable change which had taken place. The intelligence was not received with such warmly-uttered pleasure as the doctor had expected. Mr. Hardy had many questions to ask, and doubts to be removed. Was it not rather precipitate to bring his wife home? Would it not have been wiser to have waited a few days, to see if the favourable change continued? He did not like the means used in her "temporary restoration," as he called it. It was his opinion, that it would never do to leave Helen and her mother together. They would mutually enervate each other.

The doctor thought differently, and charged Mr. Hardy on no account to interrupt their intercourse, but to leave Helen to deal with her mother as her own heart might dictate.

"Depend upon it," said he, "that she is wiser, in this matter, from pure love, than either you or I in the pride of our reason. Let them alone. Her hand has already opened a window in her mother's soul, through which light is streaming. She has done more in an hour than I could have accomplished in weeks—more, probably, than I could have accomplished in years. Helen is the true physician in this case; and we must not interfere with her in the slightest degree. You may blame her for disobedience, in having left school without your permission; but I see a Providence in the act; and you may well be thankful, even while you blame."

Mr. Hardy tried not to see this Providence, because he did not wish to see it. He had resolved that Helen should go back to school; and, up to this time, he still meant to keep his resolve. But this new aspect of things was like the placing of a huge barrier in his way. The impulse to leap over this barrier, at all hazards, was very strong; but, against the physician's injunctions he dared not act in a matter, where, if evil consequences followed, his reputation in the eyes of the world must suffer deeply.

Mr. Hardy was always ready to make a virtue of necessity. He never yielded, so long as there remained any hope of accomplishing his ends; but when the last hope failed, and acquiescence was inevitable, the man put on a new exterior, and sought for compensation in the good opinion of others.

Finding that the doctor was decided, and was even beginning to manifest surprise at his evident unwillingness to accede to the requirements of the case, he gave up all opposition, saying—

"You ought to know best, Doctor, and I leave all in your hands. I am in the habit of viewing every matter that comes up for consideration on all sides, and forming my own judgment from my own reason. Of course, I cannot always be right. Questions will arise, wherein the judgment of others is superior to mine; and this, no doubt, is one of them. What is best for my wife and child, is the problem to solve. Their good is the high end we both have in view. To gain this, I am ready to make any sacrifice, however great. Ah, Doctor! you should not wonder, with so much at stake, that I should at times have many a doubt, or that I hesitate to act, where the action proposed does not accord with my own convictions. My wife and child are both dear to me. I separated them—an act that smote my heart with inconceivable pain—because I saw that they were doing

each other immense injury. The necessity that requires them again to be thrown together in even a greater mutual dependence, I cannot but regard as a serious calamity; and I tremble as I look forward to the consequences."

After this speech, uttered with a tone and manner even more deceptive than his language, the doctor gave Mr. Hardy credit for a great deal more than he deserved. But the latter was a skilled actor,—so skilled, that very few of those who met him in business or in social intercourse, could penetrate the habitual mask, or dream of the cold selfishness that coiled itself, like a stinging serpent, below the bland and genial exterior of his life.

Still the doctor was not altogether deceived. He had seen and heard enough to put him on his guard, and to satisfy him that Mr. Hardy, if not an unfeeling husband and father, was at least a mistaken one; and he knew that ignorance often works as fearful evils as design. He believed that he had discovered in Helen's separation from her mother, the exciting cause of this temporary alienation of mind; and he never yielded, for an instant, to the father's idea, that any possible injury could arise from their more intimate association and mutual dependence. Every now and then Mr. Hardy would introduce the subject by query or suggestion, but the doctor always met

him on the threshold, and settled it without argument.

There was a change in Helen that surprised her father, and by the very power of a new aspect, compelled a modified treatment. He had parted with her a weak, weeping child, whose very suffering was a temptation to his love of power; she had come to her home a calm, reserved, self-reliant woman, whose step, and mien, and tone of voice, commanded a respect that he almost felt it a humiliation to yield. The fire had penetrated to the centre of her being; but in suffering she had been changed, and now came forth purer in feeling, clearer in perception, and stronger in powers of endurance. Her first requirement, on coming home from the Asylum, was that the stranger she had found in her mother's place should at once leave, and on no account be seen by Mrs. Hardy, except as a visitor. The doctor demurred; but Helen's answer, in which she gave her reason for what she required, instantly brought the physician over to her side; and the woman, after due explanations were made, retired from the house without having been seen by its mistress.

The latter was in no condition to resume the duties of her household. The light of reason had indeed broken through the cloudy veil, but it did not yet burn with a clear radiance. She required

the wisest and the kindest treatment. Had she been left to her husband's blind discipline, it would have been needful to return her to the Asylum in less than a week.

As it was, the veil over her reason grew thinner every hour, and the light came in stronger. Things did not progress agreeably to the judgment of Mr. Hardy, who suffered all the while from an impatient desire to put forth his hand and interrupt their movement. But Helen was quiet and firm, and the doctor very watchful and quick to admonish; so that through the loving care of the one, and the wise supervision of the other, the blind home-tyrant was kept from doing the harm to which his persistent self-will was constantly prompting him.

Happily, nothing occurred to interrupt the gradual return of Mrs. Hardy to the mental health which had been so seriously impaired; and when both mind and body were so far restored that she could fill her old place in the household, she found an arm to lean upon, that was strong to support her feeble steps. Helen did not, on the restoration of her mother, recede from the active position she had taken, but maintained the womanly character so suddenly developed, and steadily, as at the beginning, kept her place by her mother's side, and between her and her father's will.

Mr. Hardy found himself baffled in almost every attempt to turn his daughter from the line of conduct which her heart's instinct led her to pursue. She never met him in open opposition, and never so directly disregarded his commands, or suggestions, as to give room for his strong self-will to lift itself in stubborn power. The mild, even, calm self-possession that was rarely lost,—the singular force and clearness of all the reasons she gave for her conduct, when questioned,—gradually inspired a feeling of respect and confidence, that took its place in his mind even despite the opposition of a meanly selfish pride.

Nothing more was said about sending Helen away to school, although Mr. Hardy did not admit to himself, for a single moment, that he had abandoned the purpose. He waited, from day to day, and from week to week, the occurrence of a good opportunity for announcing his will in that particular. But the opportunity never occurred. There was something about Helen that always put a seal upon his lips, whenever his perverse self-will prompted him to utter the sentence of exile from home. And so he had to content himself with design in the place of action. To have given up the former, would have been to acknowledge that John Hardy was wrong,—but John Hardy was "always right." Circumstances, that alter cases, were wrong in the present in-

stance; and he yielded to the power of outward events over which he had no control.

Time wore on; and no further aberration of mind took place. Every day Helen gained a new and stronger influence, and came in more and more protectingly between the arbitrary will of her father and the more sensitive members of the household. Even against his own convictions and purposes did she bend the former; and even while he meant to resist her influence, she often led him in the way she wished him to go, passive almost as a little child.

Back to its former condition of thought and feeling, the mind of Mrs. Hardy did not come. The work of restoration went on steadily to a certain point, and there progression ceased. A deep pulseless quiet seemed to have fallen on her spirit. She moved about the house, and among her children, with a placid, absent demeanour. Her voice never rose above an even tone, nor gave a sign of emotion. It seemed as if every green thing in her heart had been withered; as if all the goodly trees had cast their leaves, and the singing birds found shelter no longer amid their branches.

At intervals, more or less remote from each other, a variableness would appear in Mrs. Hardy's state of feeling. It did not rise above the usual dead level, but sank below it. A deep gloom

traceable to no apparent cause, would gather over her mind, and for days—sometimes for weeks—she would not rise from her bed; or, if wooed by her daughter's gentle entreaties to come forth and join the family, it was with a rayless countenance and eyes so sad that the heart ached to look into them. And so the months went by—lovely children springing up around the mother, and claiming her devoted attention, yet not seeming to have the power of entering her heart beyond its pillared vestibule.

Alas, for the home which Mr. Hardy had so fondly desired!—the home, so beautiful in imagination, as, looking down the vista of years, he had pictured its pleasures, and seen himself happiest of the happy, amid his wife and children! How lovely had been the ideal; how cold and sad the reality! What a terrible disappointment to all his hopes! He had been too eager and too selfish—trampling under foot the tender plants which alone could in after time have borne the fruit he coveted. He had desired a home, with love-fires shining in perpetual radiance; but his cold, proud nature could not stoop to join in the work of kindling these fires, or in keeping them brightly burning. He demanded love and obedience; but his stern voice had in it no magical power. They came not at his call!

If Mr. Hardy, during all the long years of

painful discipline thus passed through by himself and his wife, saw his error in a single instance, pride suffered no repentant impulse to ripple in sunlight and promise over his feelings. As he had commenced, he meant to go through to the last. "John Hardy had begun right, and John Hardy would end right." In the eyes of the world, he was a mild, consistent, gentlemanly, benevolent man; and as he was in the eyes of the world, so he was in his own eyes. Often he would return to the past,—often retrace his career from the beginning,—reviewing the strange, unreasonable conduct of his wife, from the very day he proposed having a home of his own up to the present period,—and in all the troubled passages of their lives he saw himself as a martyr, and his wife as a strange self-willed being, who, because she could not have her own way, made clouds and darkness to gather in perpetual gloom around their dwelling. All this he thought over again and again, but self-love kept his perceptions dim. Not once did he go out of his own consciousness, and so enter into the feelings and consciousness of his wife as to realize anything of her peculiar states, wants, or feelings. And so, over and over again, the conviction was reproduced, that "John Hardy was right." And when "John Hardy was right with himself," no rock could be more firmly based He was a moral Gibraltar!

CHAPTER XIX.

Brighter Hopes.

They sin, who tell us Love can die;
With life, all other passions fly;—
* * * * *
But Love is indestructible;
Its holy flame for ever burneth;
From heaven it came; to heaven returneth;
Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times opprest,
It here is tried and purified,
Then hath in heaven its perfect rest."—SOUTHEY.

In the progress of time, a slight change took place in the condition of Mrs. Hardy's mind. The withered heart showed signs of feeling. In the brooding warmth of her eldest daughter's love there was a pervading vitality, that, as a source of life, was ever transferring itself to the mother, until the torpid feelings of the latter began to revive and react. If the result brought a deeper capacity for enjoyment, it also brought a deeper capacity for pain. If her mind was able to see more clearly, the better vision revealed much that could not be seen without sorrow. As love, the very essence of her woman's nature, regained some of its outgoing impulses, and shot forth its clinging tendrils, the impulses fell back

again in shocks upon her heart, and the tendrils wound their spirals in the formless air.

A woman, with a highly organized spiritual nature, and with woman's eternal necessity upon her—the necessity for union with a true masculine soul, the heavenly complement of her own,—life could not flow into her heart with renewing warmth, without a restoration of desires never to be satisfied in this world. Then, as she realized again, with an acute perception, how strangely adverse to the right development and true growth of her spiritual nature, were all her marital relations, old questions intruded themselves, beclouding her mind, and filling it with perplexing doubts. Taught, from earliest infancy, to confide in and reverence the Divine Being as a loving Father of his human children, and still desiring to hold fast upon this estimate of her Creator, she found the ordeal of her life too fiery, and her own experience too full of suffering in its worst forms, to leave room for any instinctive conclusions that were not in contravention of all her first ideas of a God full of Divine benevolence. Every day these thoughts troubled her more and more. The new life in her heart, was but a life in the old forms of her being. It was still woman's life; and as it grew stronger, her woman's nature felt the old yearnings, and love stood looking forth sighing for true companionship.

Ah! bitterly, as of old—yea, more bitterly, did she mourn the sad life-bondage to which a fatal error had doomed her.

But there was one thought, ever and anon intruding itself, that brought a temporary relief. The end of her journey could not lie far in the distance. Yet quickly following this thought, came ever a troubled question, "What of the future, and its soul-affinities?" And there was no answer. How often her spirit stood still, as though hearkening for answers from the unknown, unseen world, and eagerly trembling in hope of some response. But the silence that followed her call was profound as the silence of death!

This was the state of Mrs. Hardy's mind, and such were her relations to her husband, to her family, and to society, at the period of her first introduction to the reader, from which point we now trace briefly onward the history of her inner life. We repeat a single sentence from the conclusion of the second chapter, in order to bring back the reader's mind, by an easy transition, into the progression of the narrative.

"A little while afterwards, Mrs. Percival observed that Mr. Hardy was in the centre of a group of ladies and gentlemen, to whom he was talking in a very animated way. Mrs. Hardy was not on his arm. She sought for her through the crowded rooms, but, not finding her, went

out into the garden, where she discovered her, standing under an arbour, looking more like an immovable statue than a living woman. As she came up, the light, streaming out from the open windows, and falling upon her cheeks, glittered among the crystal tears, and told that she was weeping."

Mrs. Percival took the hand of Mrs. Hardy and held it very tightly within her own, but without speaking. For some moments, there was not the slightest motion or response.

"Dear friend!" A world of true sympathy was in the low, tender tones of her voice. Instantly Mrs. Hardy's hand clasped that of Mrs. Percival with a pressure that sent an electric thrill to her heart. "Dear friend!" Mrs. Percival repeated the words with added tenderness. "Dear friend and sufferer!" she continued—"I am no curious intruder upon sorrow's sacred precincts I ask no confidence. There are in all hearts secret places that must ever remain hidden from all eyes but those of God, the Wise and the Merciful; and far be it from me to desire even to have the veil removed. Such places are in my own heart, and I would die rather than open the door for any one to enter. All I ask is the privilege of a comforter, if there be power in me to speak consoling words. I have passed through many fiery trials—fiery, it may be, as your own;

and I feel that I am stronger, and I hope purer, through suffering. If you are too weak and faint, will you lean upon my arm? Dear sister!"—there came a sudden irrepressible gush of feeling into Mrs. Percival's voice, as she added—"I love you!" Never was that closing sentence uttered with more truth or tenderness—not even by the lips of enamoured manhood in the flush of love's young dreams.

"I am very weak, and the way is dark!" How mournfully those words were said! "Dear sister! my heart springs towards you. Oh! if you will *let* me lean upon you!"

Mrs. Percival drew her arm around her, as she replied—

"Can I say more to win your confidence?"

"No,—no!" quickly answered Mrs. Hardy. My heart accepts with thankfulness the love you offer. Ah, my friend! your tones have gone very far down amid the deeper places of my soul, awakening echoes that have slumbered for years in silence—and your words have stirred a flood of emotions, along the topmost waves of which light is glittering. Oh! if the day indeed is breaking!"

"Night, dear friend!" said Mrs. Percival, "is only the absence of day. The sun is always in mid-heavens; and the earth is for ever revolving The day-spring from on high comes as surely to

the earnestly-seeking spirit, as morning to the sons of men. Lift up your eyes, and behold upon the far off mountain-tops blessed tokens of the coming dawn!"

"My vision is feeble, and my heart full of questioning doubts," replied Mrs Hardy. "I cannot see the mountain-tops. I have no true faith in the morning: and yet hope is fluttering in my heart!"

Merry voices now broke upon the air, and a group of laughing girls came bounding into the garden. Mrs. Percival drew her arm within that of Mrs. Hardy, and they moved down one of the walks. Two or three of the girls, joining them, interrupted their conversation, which was not renewed again during the evening.

A few days afterwards, they met under circumstances more favourable. Mrs. Percival called upon Mrs. Hardy, as she had promised to do. As from the heart's fulness the lips have utterance, the former subject of conversation was soon renewed, and the dark mystery of life presented for solution. Mrs. Hardy's mind was calmer than before, and her thoughts clearer, but very earnest.

"What of our future lives?" she asked, in the progress of their familiar talk. "It is into the unknown *beyond* that my eyes are ever straining themselves. Hope in this life died out long ago; but oh, my friend! what of the eternal life?"

"To the pure and godlike, it will be a life of happiness," answered Mrs. Percival.

A shade of disappointment came over the countenance of Mrs. Hardy.

"I am not satisfied with any broad generalities like this. Happiness is a positive thing, made up of mental states that depend upon conditions of life. A vague, dreamy happiness is nothing. If we are to live for ever, *how* are we to live? and under *what* laws of association? Can death make me less a woman, or put out the instincts of my woman's heart?"

"No," was the firmly uttered reply. "Death—or the separation of the natural from the spiritual—will make you *more* a woman, and quicken into higher life all your womanly instincts!"

"And it will be the same with man!"

"How can it be otherwise? Is not man as different from woman in mind as in body? Death is only a withdrawal of the spiritual from the natural and material; not an extinction of its inner forms of life. Man will remain man, and woman remain woman, as now. Thought can compass, from God-given reason, no other conclusion."

A deep sigh trembled on the lips of Mrs. Hardy. For some moments, she sat lost in thought.

"As woman is the complement of man here, so

will woman be the complement of man hereafter?" she said, at length, speaking very deliberately.

"I, for one, am disposed to believe that," replied Mrs. Percival, "or else I cannot believe in my own life, nor have any faith in its yearning instincts. I have an ever-abiding sense of personal incompleteness,—an eternal longing for an interior companionship that signifies nothing less than *oneness*."

"Oh, my friend! how entirely have you given voice to my own feelings. But does not your heart tremble, in doubt and fear, as you look forward into this unknown future, over which the darkest veil of mystery is drawn?"

"No, it does not tremble," said Mrs. Percival, a light playing over her countenance as she spoke.

Mrs. Hardy gazed, for some time, into the face of her friend.

"There is one subject on which I want more light," said she, with the manner of one who was forcing herself into the utterance of something that was either painful or repugnant. "I have before spoken of affinities, and the laws of future association. It is on this subject that I am groping in the dark. Will the same laws be in force there, that operate here? Or, to speak more plainly, is marriage here a marriage for eternity?"

"A true marriage here is an eternal marriage!" replied the friend:—"none other."

"What is a true marriage?"

"A union of mind."

"Ah!"

"Vows—pledges—promises—are but external bonds, and for this world only. They fall away at death, and are of no more after value than the body that descends to the pit. In the future life, there must be a oneness of thought and feeling, or there can be no conjunction of soul with soul."

"Blessed faith! Oh, what would I not give to feel a Divine assurance of its truth!" said Mrs. Hardy, with flushing cheeks and brightening eyes.

"Suppose," said Mrs. Percival, "there were, as has so often been imagined, a window in every one's bosom;—or, better, suppose the countenance were a mirror that reflected the spirit's true form, so that each one could see the mental constitution of his neighbour, while his own stood revealed to the eyes of every curious observer,—would not hundreds and thousands who meet, now, in smiling confidence—who woo and wed, and find misery instead of happiness—be driven asunder at the first meeting? It is because men and women do not really *know* each other, or have false views of marriage, that so many wed unwisely. But, in the other life, where each is seen and known as he is, there can be no mistakes as to harmony of disposition—and no union of opposites. The affinities will be those of love and wisdom

Men and women will be mutually attracted according to the measure in each of wisdom, and of the love of wisdom."

Mrs. Hardy looked wonderingly into the face of her friend, and listened so eagerly that her breath was almost suspended.

"Do you comprehend me?" said Mrs. Percival, after a pause.

"It seems as if I were stepping from a dark chamber into the blessed daylight!" was answered. "Oh! it must be as you say! What a world of dreams and shadows has been the future! But, you have peopled it for me with men and women who think, and feel, and love! My heart is already leaping with a new impulse. There is yet hope, and life, and—may I not believe—joy in the future?"

"God is love," said Mrs. Percival impressively.

"It must be so!" rejoined Mrs. Hardy. "Oh, what a light seems gathering around those words! For if love be God's essential nature—and if He is as wise as He is good—then He has not created the heart of a woman, with all its undying impulses—its deep, loving necessities—without providing for her in some form or other an eternal companionship."

"I could as well doubt my existence," replied Mrs. Percival. "But, in this connexion, there is another truth that deeply concerns us. If we

desire heavenly companionship, we must see to it that we be prepared for heaven."

Mrs. Hardy sighed, and there followed a gradual drooping of her countenance.

"And we are not meetened for that world," said Mrs. Percival, "by brooding over our unhappiness, but by seeking the happiness of others. As social anchorites, we gain nothing of heavenly-mindedness. Not as the old hermit are we to retire, in weakness, or cowardice, from the life-battle, and hope to win the favour of the great Captain of our salvation. The very life of heaven is the love of blessing others out of ourselves; and if we do not acquire this love *here*, it will never gain an entrance into our hearts *there*. Heaven lies in the state of the affections; and these affections must first be born on earth; for it is here that the true spiritual life, as well as the natural life, begins. As soon as these are born, we come into association with angelic spirits, and thus enter a heavenly society, with which there will be visible presence when this mortal shall put on immortality. We must have on the wedding garment—and the oil of true charity must be in our lamps—or we cannot enter into the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

Mrs. Hardy looked thoughtful even to seriousness. "I am afraid," she said, "that I am neither clothed in the wedding robe, nor am provided

with oil in my lamp; but, in the strength and at the hand of Him who giveth all good gifts to His erring and sinful children, I will seek the garment of truth and purity, and buy oil for the lamp which has too long swung rayless in my hand."

"We too often forget," said Mrs. Percival, "in our own grief, pain, or disappointment, that others suffer as well as we;—that the spirits with which we struggle in a vain antagonism are suffering spirits as well as our own;—that the links of the chain which binds us to another, chafe also that other heart. Our tears are not always shed alone. The path we tread in darkness, may be dark also to another's feet. Ah, my friend! there is, in all sorrow, whether for lost friends or lost happiness, an element of selfishness that gives double anguish to the pain. If we could only think less of our own unsatisfied longings, and let our hearts go out in pity even for those who wrong and oppress us, because they are fellow-sufferers, the burdens we bear would rest lighter on our shoulders. It is a fact worthy of note, that the moment we let sympathy for another's grief find a lodging-place in our hearts, that moment our own griefs bear upon us with a diminished pressure."

Mrs. Hardy scarcely responded to these remarks; but they took strong hold upon her thoughts, and she said mentally, "How selfish I have been!"

"We censure the old recluse for retiring from the world," resumed Mrs. Percival,—"instead of remaining in the midst of it, bravely meeting its wrongs, and striving to do some good in his day and generation. And are we who retire from society into the seclusion of our homes, there to brood over the ruins of our earthly hopes, any wiser or better than he? No, my friend, we are not! Nay! nay! Let us come out of ourselves. Let us look away from our own hearts, to which we can bring neither light nor comfort, and let us see if we cannot bring light and comfort into some other heart. In this work, our labour will not be in vain—and the blessing will be twofold."

"I thank you, dear friend!" said Mrs. Hardy, "for all that you have said. Ah! if we had met earlier!"

"It is never too late!" was the impressively spoken answer.

"No, thank God!" responded Mrs. Hardy, with a gush of feeling that surprised her visitor, who knew not how deeply her words had gone down into the heart of her suffering sister, nor with what better purposes they were already inspiring her.

CHAPTER XX.

Better Days.

"The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free."—TENNYSON.

It was perhaps an hour after Mrs. Percival took leave of Mrs. Hardy, that the latter started from a deep reverie at the sound of her husband's voice. The day was drawing to a close, and Mr. Hardy had returned from business. The perpetual shadow resting over his home—the coldness of the fireside circle—the absence of loving acts towards one who had not inspired love,—all tended to sober, and, in a degree, to sadden the spirit of Mr. Hardy, who remained cold, dignified, and exacting.

Of all this his wife had been thinking; and memory had carried her back to the early times, when her young husband, in his eagerness to compass the blessings of the home he coveted, had trampled upon her feelings, and put out the light that was to warm, and cheer, and make beautiful his dwelling; and she remembered how, ever since, they had walked on, side by side, in darkness. If her life had been a sad and dreary one,

nad not his been cheerless? Even if he had been wrong—nay, cruel—was he not a sufferer? A new feeling stirred in the breast of Mrs. Hardy—a feeling of pity for her husband. Like a stranger in a crowded city, he was in a certain sense alone in the midst of his family. All treated him with respect; yet none seemed to love him. Even the youngest hushed their merry voices, when he entered the room where they sported.

As Mr. Hardy came into the apartment where his wife was sitting, the latter raised her eyes to his face; a thing unusual, for her habit was to avoid giving him a direct look. Each saw in the countenance of the other an expression that caused the gaze to linger. What Mr. Hardy saw, was a something gentle, womanly, and tender; for the heart of his wife was speaking in her eye.

"How are you to-day, Jane?" He spoke kindly and with a real interest in his voice. How many many years had passed, since that voice had in it the slightest melody for her ears! But now it awoke pleasing emotions.

"I feel quite well," she answered, in a low even tone, while the expression of her face had in it something agreeable to the eyes that looked upon it half in wonder. "Are you as well as usual?" Mrs. Hardy gazed with some earnestness at her husband. There was a change in his countenance, which she had not observed before

"Quite as well," he replied. "Why do you ask?" he added, after a pause.

"I thought you had a weary look," said Mrs. Hardy, with so real an interest in her voice—not designed, but spontaneous—that her husband was touched with a feeling of tenderness unusual to his cold nature.

"I am often weary with the day's care and labour," he replied, "and glad when the hour of rest comes."

Mrs. Hardy said no more, but her eyes, that lingered upon his face, had a new light in them—the light of kindness. She thought of this care and labour to which he referred, and remembered that it was not all for himself:—that she was a sharer in the benefit; and that he never withheld anything from her that money could buy, if she desired its possession; while the home he provided for her and his children was not only elegant, but luxurious.

"Have I done all in my power to make this home a pleasant one for my husband?" The question intruded itself almost rebukingly. "As a wife, have I done my duty?" Self-conviction answered, "No!"

Mr. Hardy was surprised; nay, more, he was pleased at this new aspect in his wife's manner, that broke upon him like a sun-ray falling suddenly through a rifted cloud. Very gentle was his demeanour towards her all through the evening

that followed, and very guarded was he in speech and tone, lest he should call back the old, leaden aspect to her face, and change the grateful warmth of her present manner to the cold exterior she had so long worn.

The children noted the change, and a quieter tone of feeling pervaded their spirits. They drew around him with more loving instincts; and, instead of repelling them, as was too often the case, he rather invited their confidence. His speech was more subdued, and his whole air so different from its usual aspect, that a pleasing wonder filled their minds.

Mr. Hardy noted this evening as the most agreeable that he had passed at home, in the midst of his family, for many years. Its remembrance was with him the next morning, and the desire also to pass many more such evenings. Like a desert-wanderer, faint through long journeying under the exhausting sun, he had come to a spring beneath the palm-trees; he had paused for rest and refreshment; and now he felt stronger to move on again.

The first words spoken to him that day by his wife,—how rare a thing was it for her voice to reach his ears burdened with any outgoing interest! —took the form of a question as to whether she could not render him a service. With a pleased manner, he accepted the proffer, so kindly made.

Not the least obtrusive was Mrs. Hardy. The change in her conduct was simply a change from cold indifference to a manifested interest.

Very careful was her husband not to say or do anything that could disturb this new and better state of mind. How different from his usual conduct! So accustomed had he become to the utterance of unkind words, as the simple expression of his unkind feelings, that another form of speech was almost new to him; and he was in danger every moment of acting from the old habit instead of the new purpose. Once, as they sat at the breakfast-table, he forgot himself, and spoke to her with a cold sneer on his lip. He looked for a total change in her manner—for the instant going out of the light, the first faint rays of which had fallen upon him with such a genial warmth. How deeply did he regret his weakness, and blame himself for unkindness.

Almost stealthily did he lift his eyes to his wife's face to see if the old expression had returned. No—it was not there! The long lashes had fallen until they made a dark line on her cheeks, and her lips were closed rather more tightly than usual. If there was any change in her countenance, it was a look of regret, softened by a spirit of enduring patience. A kind word soon dropped from his lips, and he had the pleasure of seeing its hoped-for effect.

All day, from the time he left home in the morning till his return at night-fall, was Mr. Hardy pondering this change in his wife's manner, and wondering at its origin. No event had occurred to which he could trace it. There had been no change in him. He had been as hard, and cold, and selfishly exacting, as ever; and even on the very morning of the preceding day, had permitted himself to speak to her with more than usual unkindness. Almost the first thing observed by him on coming home again, was a little arrangement for his comfort—a trifle in itself, yet evincing a thoughtful anticipation of his wishes. Its nature left no doubt as to the hand to which he was indebted for the service. He was touched and rebuked.

The meeting between himself and his wife was quiet, and slightly reserved on both sides; yet in the manner of each, there was a new spirit of kindness. Doubly guarded was Mr. Hardy, lest, in a thoughtless moment, he should wound a sensitive nature, which he now felt prompted to shield from assault.

The deep, interior gratification felt by Mrs Hardy, at the favourable change in her husband, following so quickly upon a change in her own manner towards him, was not unmingled with painful regrets for past neglect of duty.

"Ah!" she said, "if I have suffered, have I

not also occasioned suffering! If my cup has been very bitter, has not his been bitter also? A wife should be as the sun in her husband's dwelling; but I have not been even as the moon or stars!"

A deep sigh passed her lips. It reached her husband's ears; and—a thing unusual—did not fret him as of old, though he was a man who had little sympathy with sighs and tears. Much easier than she had hoped to find them, were the new duties which Mrs. Hardy had prescribed for herself. The first effort was, perhaps, the most difficult. It was hard to forget self—to change the habits of years—to be kind towards and thoughtful of another who had made her life wretched beyond the power of words to express. But after a beginning was made—and, more particularly, after the unexpected change in her husband's manner, which that beginning had produced—the task was easier, and her reward was with her.

From that time forth, Mrs. Hardy walked in a plainer way, and there was light ahead. Upon this light she fixed her eyes, and moved steadily onward. If, from the force of habit, thought inverted upon itself, and old melancholy states began to return, she found, in a sympathetic regard for the good of others, a sustaining and a comforting power. The ground of her mind thus prepared, a religious principle took deep root. But hers was not a mere religion of pious forms, or sanctimonious

observances; it was a religion whose essential worship of God was evinced in a life of daily charity. Circumscribed was this charity, mainly by the metes and bounds of her home-circle; but it had scope enough for exercise there.

One only friend could open the door of her heart; but that friend was not her husband. To him it was closed for ever. Once he had the key, and might have entered in and possessed it as a kingdom. But that time had long since passed, and would no more return.

There is always an attractive beauty in the truly Christian spirit, let who will be its possessor; and only what is unselfish is truly Christian. Even the selfish can see an attraction about every one who acts unselfishly. The power of this new principle—the fruit of daily effort as well as of daily prayer to Him who alone can lift the heart out of its natural loves, which all turn inwards—gave to the whole life of Mrs. Hardy, at least in the eyes of her husband, a dignity that claimed respect, and a nameless charm that extorted an almost unwilling admiration. After the first few weeks of wonder on Mr. Hardy's part, and an effort on the part of his wife to be and to seem all that her position required of her, the new order of things moved on with an easy progression. Prompt, kind, considerate of all around her, and especially considerate of her husband, Mrs. Hardy removed

the temptation to oppress her out of his way. Never claiming anything for herself, never seeming to think of herself, but always seeking to benefit others, or to give them pleasure, it was impossible for him to feel unkindness, or to find occasion for blame.

Gradually, his whole treatment of his wife assumed a new character. Daily, since that memorable evening on which he had noted a gentler expression on her face, had she continued changing in his eyes, growing more and more like the true woman of his imagination, yet seeming all the while to recede farther from him. And she did recede farther and farther every day, rapidly acquiring spiritual qualities and characteristics so different from those of her husband, that actual heart-sympathy was impossible.

Wonderful also was the change in Mrs. Hardy's countenance. First, the deadly pallor gave place to the faintest life-tints, and the inward-looking, lustreless eyes, grew bright with feeling. Their old depths of beauty were restored. She had once been very lovely. This charm had faded away, until, to common eyes, but little that was attractive remained. Yet now her beauty was again renewed—not the old beauty, which was of the earth, earthly—but a new beauty, which was of heaven, heavenly,—the beauty as of an angel!

CHAPTER XXI.

The Separation.

"Oh! change,—oh! wondrous change!
Burst are the prison-bars!
This moment *there*, so low,
So agonized, and now
Beyond the stars!

"Oh! change, stupendous change!
There lies the soulless clod!
The sun eternal breaks,
The new immortal wakes,
Wakes with his God!"—C. Bowles.

Between Mrs. Hardy and Mrs. Percival, the closest intimacy continued. They were, indeed, sister-spirits. Both had passed through the fire, and both were purer from the ordeal. Mrs. Percival was wiser and stronger; and though the anguish of her soul had been great, no faltering of step or fainting by the way had occurred. As a true woman, she had now drawn to the side of a suffering sister, and extended a hand for support and guidance. Wise had been her counsels, loving her ministrations, faithful to the highest good her friendship. Neither was happy in her marriage-relation; neither had found the soul's true companion; yet, in no instance, in all their

confidential intercourse, had either of them uttered a reproach against her husband. Concerning the gentlemen, no words involving censure were suffered to escape them. That was an indelicacy of which neither was capable. And yet both fully comprehended the other's position; and each gained strength from the other to act the wife's part faithfully, if not lovingly.

Two years of a new and better life for Mrs. Hardy passed on, altering her whole appearance to such a degree, that all who remembered her former drooping form, and shrunken, depressed countenance, wondered as they looked upon her. To her husband she was a mystery, and had been so from the beginning of this new state. Had he ever comprehended her?

And now, another cycle in her life seemed to have been completed; for there was another change. The feeble, exhausted body, which had caught a fresh vigour from the re-animating spirit, and had put on the beautiful semblance of health, began to fail—steadily, but surely. The cheek paled once more, the step grew slow and feeble, the eye weary. Ere the day went down, the delicate framework of her body was oppressed by exhaustion.

Quickest to note these symptoms was her husband, and first to propose change and relaxation. All that care and kindness on his part could do,—

all that the physician's art could accomplish,—availed not. The life-sources of her being were exhausted. Daily she became thinner and more pale, until she seemed only a shadow that might soon flit away.

Even amid all this wasting of the feeble body and waning of its life, she grew more and more attractive in her husband's eyes. He felt the angelic purity of her character, and trembled as the fatal truth of her speedy removal grew daily more apparent. How he longed to win the love of her purified spirit—to draw her into himself—to possess her as his own; and he became the more eager, as the steady recession of her spirit went on, and the sad conviction intruded itself that, in a very little while, he should see her on earth no more.

In no case did Mrs. Hardy repel her husband—in no case manifest, to his perceptions, the entire alienation of her spiritual life from his. Gentle, kind, earnest, thoughtful,—she never failed in service until the accumulation of good deeds really oppressed him.

"Do not think so much of my comfort, Jane," he would sometimes remark, when met by new proofs of her loving care for his pleasure—"think more of yourself."

Mr. Hardy felt the heavenly warmth of the smile that would play around her lips and over

her countenance; but the source of that smile was hidden from his eyes. It lay too far down in the deep places of her soul for his dim vision to reach. It was the smile of an angel; born of heavenly joy, at the recognition that a truer and better life was kindling in the heart of one who had long been ruled by the spirit of selfishness.

How the strong man bowed himself at the feet of angelic beauty! He was gentle as a child—tender as a woman—devoted as a lover. All the hours of the day seemed spent in thoughtful care for his wife. In the morning he lingered at her bedside; in the evening he hastened home to take his place near her pillow, and hold within his grasp her shadowy hand. What a new spirit pervaded the household! What a new life was there among the children! It had been one of the things nearest to the heart of the failing wife and mother to create a true sympathy between the children and their father, so that when she passed from among them, they might draw together by the powerful attraction of love. And she had not worked in vain.

For a time, indeed, Helen remained like ice towards her father. Thought and perception had, through his cruelty in separating her from her mother, acquired too rapid a development; and the woman's instincts gained maturity faster than the woman's self-controlling reason.

The cold selfishness of her father had shocked and repelled her, and there had been periods when, but for her mother, she would have fled from his presence. At length, Mrs. Hardy succeeded in creating in the mind of her daughter a feeling of kindness towards the father. She began by assigning to her the daily performance of a certain service that she knew would gratify him. An expression of pleasure on his part was Helen's first reward; then followed a word of praise, when he learned to whose hand he was indebted for a daily service. From that time, a new state of feeling was created in the heart of each. The father and child drew together with an hourly increasing affection, and joined hands lovingly in the work of ministering to the angel of their house, whose wings were already lifting themselves, and ready for the departure.

For the first time in his life, the conviction forced itself upon the mind of John Hardy, that John Hardy was not right!—that, in his stern persistence, he had been wrong! What a conviction for a man of his character! What a world of blind, cruel selfishness was revealed to his inward-glancing vision, as light broke in!

The strong man bowed his head, yea, and his humbled spirit also, to the dust. Memory suddenly became an avenger, holding in her vigorous hand a whip of scorpions, as she steadily turned

over the leaves of his book of life. How earnestly he tried to look away from the past; to shut his eyes, as page after page was unfolded, and the accusing record shown! But that was impossible. What had been done, could not be undone.

Steadily waned the life of Mrs. Hardy, and every day the eyes of watchful love saw new signs of the speedily coming dissolution of soul and body.

"We shall meet again," said the husband, as he sat alone with her, holding her small shadowy hand in his, just as the twilight began to draw its dusky curtains around them. His voice trembled; for he had spoken in answer to her remark that, in a very little while, she must pass away.

"I know not how that may be," she said, very quietly, and fixing her large, glittering eyes upon his face. "In the world to which I am going, the laws of association are not as the laws of this world, John."

"Oh, Jane! what am I to understand by this?" There was grief in the tones of his voice.

"Only," she replied, "that, in the life to come, spiritual qualities conjoin. They will be near each other who are alike, and those distant from each other who are unlike, in their life and their affections. The attraction or repulsion will be mutual. But God alone knows our internal states, by which the future is determined. If it is well with us as to these, we need have no concern."

Mr. Hardy felt the words of his wife like sharp thrusts of glittering steel. How calmly she spoke! What a placid, almost angelic expression was in her countenance, as she talked of the laws of conjunction and dissociation in the future life—laws which, if they really prevailed, would hold them apart for ever! "I know not how that may be. In the world to which I am going, the laws of association are not as the laws of this world." Such was her calm, even-toned answer to his almost tearfully-uttered assurance of a meeting after death. It was thus she removed from under his feet the frail support on which they rested as the waters of sorrow began to roar around him. He covered his face with his hands, and sat silent for many minutes.

"Can you not forgive the past? Oh, Jane! if, through blind error, I wronged you once, have I not sought in all possible ways to make atonement?" Mr. Hardy looked up and spoke with a sudden energy.

A shadow dimmed the face of his wife, and tears sprung to her eyes.

"We have both need of forgiveness, John," she replied; "I, perhaps, most of all. We cannot conceal from ourselves, if we would, that the current of our lives did not run smoothly at the beginning, nor for a long time afterwards. The cords that bound us together were not silken, and

light as gossamer to bear; but heavy and galling as links of iron. I blame myself in many things. I was not a true, self-forgetting, loving wife to you, John. I did not make your home a happy one. I struggled, and fretted, and made myself wretched, when I should have thought of your comfort, and striven, in fulfilment of my marriage-vows, to make you happy!"

"Dear Jane! say no more! Your words pierce me like arrows!" Mr. Hardy laid a finger upon her lips. "Oh, if the scales had sooner fallen from my eyes!"

"If I had helped you to remove them," said Mrs. Hardy, almost mournfully, "both would have suffered less. But I was young, and weak from years of indulgence by the tenderest of fathers. I did not comprehend your wants and wishes; and you did not understand me. I never meant to act in opposition, and never did, wilfully and perversely. I never intended to give you pain But I could not hide all signs of anguish, when your words were accusations. Nor could I always look smiling and cheerful, when my heart was aching. I say this now, only that you may do me justice in your thoughts: for I would not have you think of me, after I am gone, as one who, designedly, and for the purpose of gratifying an evil purpose, made the home cheerless which she had promised to fill with sunlight God gave

me power afterwards to rise above the weakness of my nature; and I was able to be to you, my husband, all that I desired to be from the beginning. If you had helped me, and borne with me at the first; if you had been gentler and more forbearing; if you had laid your hand lightly on what seemed wrong; if you had regarded me as a weak, inexperienced girl, sensitive to a fault, yet full of the purest love for you, and not as a matured, thoughtful woman, with a strong purpose to have her own way, you would have judged me more correctly, and it would have been better for us both. But the past is past, and I turn to it only for justice, not in order to wound. Forgive me for what I have now said, if it has given you any pain. I cannot, in parting with you, perhaps for ever, leave on your mind the impression that I ever meant to be anything but a true wife."

"For ever, Jane? For ever? Oh, do not say that word! Let me hear your lips recall it!" And Mr. Hardy bent over her with a countenance full of anguish.

Mrs. Hardy, after a slight pause, resolved on giving utterance to the following truths, just because they were truths, and best therefore to be spoken, even if they failed in affording any present comfort. There were few signs of earthly emotion in her low voice, musical though it was with angelic affections.

"A woman's heart, John, is a strange instrument, and few men have learned to play upon it skilfully. In most cases, the bold hand is dashed roughly amid its delicate strings, shattering some, straining others, and silencing for ever chords that would have trembled with delightful harmonies. It is woman's nature to love. To her, love is an eternal necessity. But this love is a free principle. No power in earth or heaven can bind its impulses. It goes forth spontaneously and takes hold, like a vine, upon some manly nature, seeking to give beauty and grace, and lifting itself up thereby into higher and purer regions. It binds its arms gently, yet firmly, around this sustaining manhood, and bears its fruitful clusters of blessing. And the more it is cherished and protected, the stronger it grows, and the more intimately and lovingly does it entwine itself amid all the outspreading branches. There is nothing hard, nor harsh—nothing of opposition or contention—nothing of proud self-sustaining isolation in the nature of a true woman. She asks only the right to love, and the joy of being loved in return.

"In this world, where hearts are hidden things, and woman must believe where she cannot see—must take loving words and acts in the full confidence that they are true words and acts—it too often happens, that her lot is one of wretchedness. The fair exterior of manhood, so attractive in her

eyes, often proves to be a false exterior. She finds nothing in his affection or his principles with which she can truly harmonize; and, though she may live with him dutifully, and even in some appearance of love, yet is there no true union of the heart—no marriage in the higher sense.

"With such, death is an eternal disjunction. How could it be otherwise in a world where similitude conjoins, and dissimilitude separates? And this law of attraction and repulsion, my husband," continued Mrs. Hardy, speaking very earnestly, "is a merciful law. If there is an error here, it will not be perpetuated when we pass up higher. Of one thing we may be certain; the quality of our spiritual life in this world, will determine our associations in the life beyond; and in heaven we shall desire none other."

Mr. Hardy had bowed his head while she was speaking. It was some moments before he looked up. When he did so, his face was paler, his eyes were heavy, and his countenance wore a drooping aspect. What sharp arrows of conviction were in the words which had been spoken by his wife! Steadily he gazed into her face, wonderingly and sorrowfully, while every moment the conviction grew stronger that their separation was likely to be an eternal one;—that her pure spirit would ascend higher than he ever could, and claim companionship with spirits of more godlike nature

Neither made any further remark for some time, and then the theme was changed. Not again, even remotely, was the subject of their unhappy lives referred to by either. Mrs. Hardy had spoken only from a sense of duty. If pain followed her words, it was a salutary pain. It would be better for him to comprehend the inevitable laws of retribution;—better for his future and eternal state, in contrast with which all finite considerations are as dust against gold in the balance.

A few days later, and the closing scene arrived. With the last fluttering of her pulse, the last faint sigh that parted her lips and gently moved her bosom, Mr. Hardy felt that he had indeed parted with his wife; and, he feared, for ever! God had given him, as a companion, a true, loving spirit, who would have been an angel in his house; but in his selfish blindness, he had wronged and cruelly oppressed her from the outset; and when his eyes were opened, and he saw the celestial beauty of her character, she was fading from the earth, and rising upwards. It was too late!—Alas! alas! how many, like him, have made a similar discovery too late!

A different man was he from that time forth. Among the last words of his dying wife were these: "Be tender with Helen: she is more like me than any of the rest." Did he forget them? No! They seemed constantly sounding in his ears. In

form and features, as well as in disposition, Helen was like her mother; and now that the mother's presence was removed, this likeness grew daily more apparent. In stature, carriage, and voice, she resembled her mother, as much as in countenance and disposition. And so a living remembrance of the lost one was ever kept before the father's mind.

His thoughtful, never-wearying, affectionate care, now turned with undying devotion upon his eldest child—who had felt towards him an almost entire alienation, and whose remembrances of the past were painfully vivid. But he won, at last, her love and confidence; and warm affection took the place of duty.

Mr. Hardy aged rapidly after the death of his wife. He separated himself almost entirely from general society, and lived a kind of hermit-life in the bosom of his family. Four years later, and prematurely old, stooping and life-weary, he laid down the burden of mortality. Helen was still unmarried; but her life was beautiful. She was the maiden sister, caring for all, beloved by all, and diffusing around her a heavenly atmosphere that made her presence an inspiration. And so her existence moved on like a quiet stream, glassing the daily sunshine, and bearing along its way, health, and greenness, and beauty

CHAPTER XXII.

Edward Linton.

"Die Lieb' ein brausend Meer, wo im Gewimmel
Vieltausendfältig Wog' an Woge schlägt:
Freundschaft ein tiefer Bergsee, der den Himmel
Klar wiederspiegelnd in den Fluthen trägt."—GEIBEL.

"Love is a raging ocean,
Where, in confus'd motion,
Ten thousand thousand waves are dashing high;
But friendship aye resembles
The mountain-tarn, where trembles
A flood serene, and mirrors back the sky."
TRANSLATION

HAPPY would it be for the world, if evil consequences died away, when those die who have perpetrated the evil, and originated its dire results. But wrong as well as right has a reproductive power; and the circle of baneful influence, no less than that of influence for good, is ever growing wider and wider. It is with our every action, as it is with the first disturbing force that ripples the lake's placid surface, and thus stirs nto existence a hundred concentric circles, which spread away in the distance until the eye is baffled in its attempts to trace and number them.

On this principle it is, that we feel constrained to furnish the sequel without which our narrative

would be incomplete. Mr. and Mrs. Hardy slumbered in the grave; but being dead, they yet spoke. There were those living who had been moulded under their training, who had lived in their presence, who had been witnesses of their home-life.

Helen, the eldest sister, as she advanced along the cycle of womanhood, and as all the pure excellence of her character impressed itself in beauty on her countenance, won the love of many; and not a few were the suitors who came to her, speaking words that rarely sound in a maiden's ear without causing her heart to thrill. When she recalled so much of her mother's history as she could comprehend, it made her shudder and shrink back from the thought of marriage. She felt that she dared not meet the chances. And yet, true woman as she was, she felt a deep yearning for companionship—and for a love, the foundations of which were laid far down in the deep places of her soul.

Among the suitors for the hand of Helen, was a young man named Edward Linton. He was worthy to possess her; and to say thus much is to make a large admission in his favour. As he approached, she receded;—as he sought to unlock the door of her heart, she double-bolted it upon the inside.

"I have seen one heart withered up,—one life

made wretched beyond the power of language to describe," she said to herself;—" and I will not venture the precious freight of a woman's love in one frail human vessel. I will not put it in the power of any man to trample upon a heart that prefers loneliness to wrong—and unsatisfied yearnings to a cruel bondage."

Yet, even as she said this to fortify her resolutions, the sound of Edward Linton's voice echoed faintly, but very musically, from some far-off chamber of her soul, which it had reached in spite of all the interposing barriers.

Edward was one of the successors to her father's business, and also an executor under his will. This naturally brought them frequently together in a business-relation, and made his visits to the family almost a thing of course. With Helen's brothers and sisters he was a favourite; and his place in her own regard was higher than that of any man she had ever met. Had her life-experiences been different—had there been with her no haunting memories of woman's wedded wrongs, her heart would have leaped to his words of love with a joyful impulse. As it was, she closed her ears, and resolutely repressed her inmost feelings.

But, with Edward Linton, the love of this pure and beautiful maiden was no passing emotion. Not suddenly had it been born; for there was such a shy reserve about Helen—such a shrinking

away from observation—that he did not at first comprehend her true worth. When once he did, the entrance-way for any other love was closed for ever in his heart.

It was on a pleasant June evening that he ventured to speak plainly of the love which he had already manifested in a thousand little acts and words that no maiden could misunderstand. They were walking home from a friend's house at which Edward had called for her—not by appointment, but of his own accord, and with the express purpose of securing an opportunity to tell her of what was first in his thought at morning-dawn, and last in his thought when the night-shadows closed in temporary oblivion around him. He did not feel the hand tremble that rested on his arm; nor was there any visible emotion in the low, sweet voice—always sweet to his ears—that answered,

"Be to me a brother, Edward—and let me be as your sister. I shall never marry."

"Oh, Helen! Helen! you must recall these words," said Edward, with a grief in his tones that could not be concealed; for he was unprepared to meet so calmly-spoken, and so distinct a denial of his suit.

"Never!" With what a deep, calm earnestness was the word spoken. "Never!" It was repeated with even a deeper emphasis. "Never!"

she added, as if to extinguish all hope in the mind of her lover.

"Helen!" The young man grasped her hand, and held it very tightly, even though she made a feeble effort to remove it. "Helen—dear Helen! This must not be. I will not say over again the words I have just spoken; nor add others of like import. Truly have I told you of my love—a love that can never die. If I am one you cannot love"—

"No, Edward," was the quick answer, breaking in upon the words he was about to utter; "as a friend and brother, you are more highly esteemed than any other. Be to me still a friend and brother. But seek no nearer relationship;—for I am resolved to pass through this mortal existence unfettered and free. No man's happiness shall be marred by the inharmonious action of my life, and I will not risk the destruction of my own through want of harmony in another's life indissolubly linked to mine."

"Oh, Helen!—Sister!—if you will let me call you by no dearer name—but sister only now,—in what false school have you learned this strange philosophy?"

"I have learned it in the stern school of life, Edward," was answered with unwavering calmness. "Very early I took my first lessons—very early were my eyes opened to the real, sad, heart

breaking realities around me; and I have been a learner and an observer ever since. That my mother was not a happy woman, I need not tell you, Edward; and yet she was a true, loving woman, capable of the highest happiness;—a truer, better, and more loving woman than I am, or ever shall be. If she had not married, her life would have passed along beautifully and tranquilly, like a pleasant stream through grassy meadows. But it fretted and chafed for years amid rocky channels; was lost for a time in the hot sands of an arid desert; and only became clear and fertilizing at last through God's infinite pity for one of His wronged and suffering children."

"If she had not married," said the young man, slowly and impressively, "you would never have been born. Think of that, and then tell me whether her life, even though passed in suffering, was a vain life? Can you turn your consciousness inward, and after considering yourself as you are, wish that you had never received the gift of being—or, that you had been endowed with any other individuality than your own?"

"Your questions bewilder me, Edward," said the maiden, seeming almost to catch her breath.

"Try to answer them to your own satisfaction," he replied.

"I can never hope to do that. As I am, God made me: and I ask not to be changed, except

from evil to good. But as for marriage that is a new condition of life, voluntarily assumed. I have thought long and often of this matter, Edward;—I have deeply pondered it in my heart, and you know my life-enduring conclusion. I will not trust my happiness in the keeping of any man The risk is too great."

"You may safely trust it in my hands," was the answer, in tones of winning tenderness.

"It is in vain, Edward. I question not your high honour, nor your deep sincerity. But no man can rightly understand a woman. There are wants in her nature—capacities of loving and suffering—that lie too deep down in her soul for the plummet-line of his perceptions to reach. No, Edward—I understand myself too well to risk everything on the experiment of marriage. Not only should I be the loser, if the experiment were to prove disastrous;—you would be a sufferer also. Bound together for life, in bonds that no human hands could unloose, both would be wretched. If I were miserable, could you be happy? Impossible!"

"It grieves me to hear you speak thus, Helen," replied her lover,—"grieves me deeply for your sake as well as my own. Your views have become strangely warped;—your feelings are morbid, not healthy."

"Just the reason why I should not marry,

Edward—and one of the reasons why I will not. I admit all you say. My life has not been a healthy one. I have had experiences that changed the child-life into the woman's life too early, and gave to it a morbidly sensitive development. I should be for ever in danger of misapprehension. An unkind look would be to me a blow; an unkind word a death-wound! No—no, Edward. Pass on your way. Seek another companion, and let me work out my life-problem alone. Perhaps we may"—

But she suddenly checked the utterance of what was in her thoughts.

"Perhaps what, Helen? Speak on."

"I have no more to say, Edward."

How evenly, almost coldly, this was said!

"Take up the whole subject again?" urged the young man, almost imploringly, as he was about parting with her that night. "There is a true marriage, as well as a false one, and its crown is unimagined felicity. Dear Helen! ours, believe me, will be a true marriage."

They had entered her house, and were sitting together. Helen turned her face, so that the light fell upon it; and Edward saw that it was pale and very sad—showing a depth of emotion which her voice had not betrayed

"As a friend and brother, Edward," she replied, "I bear towards you a warm affection. No deeper sentiment can be admitted into my heart If you

will continue to be as a friend and brother—well. If not, let our ways in life diverge here; for, believe me, they can have no closer parallel!"

For many minutes, Edward Linton sat silent and motionless. He then said—

"Answer me one question, and truly, Helen."

"I will answer one, or two, or three," she replied. "But let it be understood, that, with this interview, the subject closes for ever."

"Is there anything about me that repels you?"

"Nothing," was the prompt, free-spoken word that fell from her lips.

"Have you seen in my character any trait the existence of which, if you were my wife, would destroy your happiness?"

"No, Edward, I have not."

"One question more, and the last:—Have you ever loved another?"

"Never! Never! My heart, Edward, is a sealed book."

"Enough," said the young man, rising,—"I accept all you will give me—the love of a sister and friend."

He would have said more, but his heart was too deeply moved. Almost crushing the small hand he held at parting, he uttered the words—"Good night!" and turning away, went slowly from the house. It was night with him, and one that continued long before the breaking of day.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Error Detected.

"Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks,
The further we are forced apart,
Affection's firm elastic links
But bind the closer round the heart." — Hood.

Helen was in error. Her heart was not a sealed book. Edward Linton had unlocked the clasps—had opened it—had written his name on the first page in characters never to be effaced;—and it was all in vain that she tried to shut the book again, or turn her eyes away from the writing it contained. But it was her secret alone, and one that she meant to carry with her to the grave.

It would have required a colder temperament than that of Edward Linton to find, in the placid love we bear for sister or friend, anything like a substitute for the lover's ardent passion; or to live in almost daily association with the being dearer to him than all the world beside, and yet feel the doom of an abiding spirit-exile.

No truth was clearer than that Helen was the only woman he could ever love; and he was a man who had too pure an ideal of life, and too

high an appreciation of the sacredness of marriage, ever to wed from any worldly or selfish considerations. He could never have said to any other living woman, "I love you"—for that would have been false; he could never have uttered vows of fidelity, when his heart was all another's—even though another's, hopelessly.

For a while, the young man continued to visit Helen, as of old. But the sight of her only inflamed his passion, and made his life wretched. The quiet attentions of the brother and friend were for ever losing themselves in the warmer actions of the lover, and were as often repelled by a womanly reserve that was ice to his feelings. A year of such a life, during the course of which he saw no change in Helen except an increase of endearing qualities, warned him, by its effect upon his mind, of the necessity, in mere self-protection, for an external separation. It would not do for him to meet her, except at remote intervals. As to forgetting her, that he neither desired nor sought. Hope was not dead in his heart. No, no! He had faith in the future—though it was so far away in the distance that the brightness of its coming dawn was not yet visible on any of the cloud-topped mountains.

And so Edward Linton withdrew, and stood afar off with his eyes turned away. Very lonely was his life—lonely and hermit-like But he

was a thinking, earnest man; and, withal, one who, deeply conscious of the depressing force of hereditary tendencies, sought, through Divine power, to rise into a higher life than that which we call natural—a life of spiritual qualities and perceptions. He read, and studied, and thought with an earnest, searching spirit. Happily it was in the right direction. New truth dawned upon his mind—not that of a mere natural, sensual, and blinding philosophy that never lifts itself above the clouds and dimness of this world; but that of true spiritual religion, bright, clear, and heavenly in all its elucidations. As he pondered, light shone into his perceptions, and the mystery of Providence gradually unfolded itself, until forms of order, wisdom, and beauty appeared, where, a little while before, everything seemed hidden or deformed.

Much, however, was yet seen darkly; and particularly dark was the providence that separated him from one who should have been his married partner—one, whose interior life remained in as stern an isolation as his own. This he could not comprehend—this troubled him. He had not yet fully apprehended, though he was not prepared to deny the truth that, to both of them, this painful discipline might only be a preparation for that true internal oneness into which only purified spirits may enter.

As for Helen, the years glided over her head very placidly, so far as the world, or even those who saw her daily, could perceive. Her sisters, under her loving care, had now passed through the years of pleasant girlhood, were grown up to woman's estate, and were all married well, in the ordinary acceptation of that phrase. None of them possessed Helen's acute feelings; none of them had spirits as finely attuned. Their husbands were men of ordinary mould; and both husbands and wives were satisfied with their choice. But the marriages were not such as gave any encouragement to Helen, to venture in their track upon so treacherous a sea.

We have said that, so far as the world could see, the years moved on with Helen very placidly. But the world had no eyes for her interior life. Her heart sacredly kept its own secrets. The page on which Edward Linton had written his name, was yet unmarked by another word, and time had neither blurred the sheet, nor dimmed the impress. Whenever she turned her eyes inward, she saw the inscription; and many a sigh had passed her lips, and many a tear fallen, as she gazed upon it. For him she often grieved; rarely for herself—for well had she learned her lessons of endurance. When he ceased visiting her, she felt a kind of relief; but yet she missed his companionship, and there followed a sense of

loneliness and desertion that was almost painful. But she subdued this feeling, or at least made an effort to do so, and sought, in the many duties of maiden-sister and maiden-aunt—distinctions these, for which she was yet young—to find a tranquillity of spirit, which she endeavoured to accept as a compensation for the higher pleasures to which every woman is born. But the voice of nature was never entirely silenced—the yearnings for a truer life were never fully repressed.

Time moved on apace; and there grew up around Helen, in the homes of her sisters, a band of young children, to whom she ministered with a loving care, and in whose eyes she ever appeared beautiful and good as an angel. At remote intervals, she met Edward Linton in company. He was still unmarried. He never approached her familiarly, on these occasions; but, after their rather cold and formal greeting, she would often, as she looked to the quarter of the room where he happened to be, find his eyes resting upon her in a gaze so sadly earnest that it would haunt her for weeks afterwards. These meetings always disturbed her spirit, and threw questioning doubts into her mind. To herself, she had only been just! Self-protection was one of the first laws of our being! But, had she been just to him? Ah! that was a new view of the case. Was she not willing to make some sacrifice for one who loved

her with an undying love? for one, whose whole life was desolate, because deprived of her companionship?

This was her state of mind, when, one day, the husband of a sister with whom she was spending a little time, said, in her presence—

"I saw Mr. Linton off in the steamer to-day."

"Ah! Is he going to make the tour of Europe?" said the young wife.

"No; he goes to reside in London, as the representative of their house there."

"Permanently?"

"Yes. He told me that he hardly expected to return to this country within ten years."

No more was said. A close observer would have been in considerable doubt as to whether Helen had heard the few sentences that passed between her sister and her brother-in-law.

But she did hear them, and they disturbed her more profoundly than anything she had heard for years. As soon as she could retire, without attracting attention, she did so, and withdrew to the seclusion of her own apartment.

"What does this mean?" Thus she spoke to herself, resolutely laying her hand upon her bosom with a firm pressure,—"What is Edward Linton to me, that the knowledge of his removal to another country gives me a quicker heart-beat?"

She looked inward with a steady gaze. And

what did she see? Only the image of Edward Linton! It must be a phantasy. She closed her eyes tightly, and then looked again. The image was more distinct, and the eyes were gazing upon her with all the love and tenderness that filled them, when he took her hand in his years ago, and told her that she was dearer to him than all the world. How beautiful was the countenance! How full of manly dignity; of high honour; of pure sentiment! She gazed and gazed upon it, and could not turn her eyes away.

From that time, there was a change in Helen, visible to all eyes. The exterior of her life had habitually been very quiet and unobtrusive. But with the spoken word, had always come a pleasant smile, that lit up her face, and gave to it a peculiar sweetness. The first apparent change in her was the gradual fading of this smile; the next, was the frequent recurrence of fits of silence and abstraction, the causes of which, when questioned, she never attempted to explain.

After the lapse of a year, signs of failing health became visible, to the alarm of all her friends. Medical aid was sought; but the physician could discover no organic disease, nor was he able, by means of any remedies he could give, to change the condition of her system from one of ever-increasing prostration to one of healthy vital action.

Steadily the work of decline went on At the end of the second year, she was little more than the shadow of her former self. Change of scene and climate were now strongly urged by the physician, as the only remaining hope; and after long persuasion, Helen consented to accompany a brother-in-law and one of her sisters on a voyage across the ocean, with the ultimate design of visiting, should strength permit, France, Italy, and Switzerland. On arriving in London, Helen was weaker than when she left America. The physician who was called in declared that her lungs were seriously affected, and advised an immediate removal to the South of France. To Marseilles the party went, in all haste; and there, in the land of the olive, the fig, and the almond, on the shores of the blue Mediterranean, where the atmosphere was genial and balmy, the wasted invalid for a brief period took up her residence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Invalid.

"The woman could not be of nature's making,
Whom, being kind, her misery made not kinder."
TAYLOR.

FROM Marseilles, most of the party, after a few days, took the steamer for Italy, leaving Helen in the care of an English family at the hotel, during their short absence. The pure, mild air acted upon her frame like an invigorating cordial. On her arrival, she was so feeble that she could not walk without an arm to lean upon; but within a week, she had gained ground so rapidly, that she not only walked alone about her room, but through the house, and out into the garden.

One afternoon, as she sat reading by an open window, through which came fresh breezes from the sea, the chambermaid, a warm-hearted girl, to whom Helen was indebted for numberless kind offices, came in, looking pale and excited.

"Poor gentleman!" she said in tones of pity. "Oh, it was very sad!"

"What was sad, Jeanette? What about the poor gentleman?" inquired Helen.

"He looked so white, as they carried him in their arms," said the girl, as the tears came into her eyes. "They say he broke a blood-vessel while he was in the train, and was all but dead."

"Who is he?" asked Helen with an awakening interest.

"I don't know who he is. He was alone, I believe. They are going to put him in the room next to your's; and I have come up to tell you. So don't be frightened."

Helen turned pale, in spite of this warning. Just then the sound of feet, and of smothered voices, was heard on the stairs. Jeanette went into the passage, and closed the door after her, trying to shut out the noise. But it drew nearer every moment, and Helen heard, in the next room, the heavy tread of those who bore the body. A slight shudder ran through her frame. For a time there was much walking to and fro, and the low murmur of subdued voices. Then one after another retired; until a deep silence reigned in the sick man's chamber.

After a while, her door was pushed slowly open again, and Jeanette entered, with a noiseless step.

"How is the sick man?" Helen inquired, in a whisper.

"The doctor looks serious," answered the girl. 'The poor man has lost so much blood, that they

are afraid he will die. The doctor says that everything must be kept very quiet in all the rooms."

"Is there no friend with him?" inquired Helen.

"None. He was alone in the train."

"An entire stranger here?"

"Yes. Last spring a man was brought in, as he was brought in to-day—looking just as pale and death-like. But his mother was with him, and oh, how tenderly she nursed him night and day! The doctor said that nothing else saved his life;—that if he had been left with one of our hired nurses, he must have died. Now, this man has neither a wife, a sister, nor a mother to care for him, and I'm afraid he will die—poor gentleman! They are going to send for old Pauline to nurse him; but she is rough-handed and deaf, and sleeps when she should be watching."

Jeanette shook her head as she closed the sentence.

"Have they sent for Pauline?" Helen asked, after sitting for some moments, with her eyes cast down.

"I am to go for her," answered the girl.

Helen was silent, and looked thoughtful. Jeanette moved towards the door.

"Where are you going?" said Helen.

"For Pauline."

There was a manner about Helen as if some

thing was on her mind. The girl saw this, and stood with her hand upon the door. But, the former cast her eyes again to the ground.

"I shall be back soon," said Jeanette, more for the purpose of giving the lady an opportunity to say what was in her thoughts, if she had a wish to do so, than from the idea that any interest was taken in her movements.

"Stay!" As Helen looked up, there was an unusual flush upon her cheeks, and an unwonted brightness in her eyes.

Jeanette removed her hand from the door, and advanced a few steps towards her.

"Don't go for Pauline yet," said Helen.

The girl looked at her wonderingly.

"Is the poor man very low?" asked Helen.

"Oh, yes! There is scarcely a spark of life remaining."

"And Pauline, you say, is not a good nurse?"

"Pauline is old, and not very tender in her ways," answered Jeanette.

"And the poor sick man wants a gentle, tender, kind nurse?"

"He'll die," said the girl, in a positive way. "And he won't be the first that has died in her hands, either. I don't know why it is that they always will send for her—the hateful creature. I wish she were dead!"

"Can't we nurse him for a day or two, Jeanette?

I feel a great deal stronger and better, and if you will sit up part of the night, I will watch with him."

The girl looked, in surprise, for some moments, into the face of the invalid stranger, who, only a few days before, had scarcely sufficient strength to bear the weight of her own shadowy frame;—and then, shaking her head, replied—

"No, no. It will make you ill; and besides, the doctor will never consent. The doctor says that Pauline must be his nurse;—and he will be very angry, if she is not sent for."

"Who is in the room with him now?" asked Helen.

"The doctor and Madame Le Brun."

Helen arose, and moved towards the door with a firm step and a resolute air.

"Come with me," she said. "I am going into the sick man's room."

Jeanette, seeing that she was really in earnest, made no attempt to dissuade her from her purpose, but moved along by her side, and accompanied her to the adjoining chamber. The doctor and Madame Le Brun (the wife of the hotel-keeper) looked wonderingly at Helen as she entered. She gave a polite, though silent salutation; then she moved noiselessly to the bed, though with a firm step, as of one walking in the way of duty—and bent over to look upon the pale face of the sick

stranger. She stood thus only for an instant, and she showed no sign of feeling. But, when she turned to the physician, her face was as colourless as that of the exhausted invalid.

"It is too much for you," whispered Madame Le Brun, coming to her side quickly. "How could you bring the lady here!" she added, throwing a dark frown upon Jeanette.

Madame Le Brun attempted to lead Helen from the apartment, but the latter quietly waved her aside, and turning to the doctor said, in a whisper—

"You need not send for Pauline. I will be his nurse."

The doctor shook his head, and Madame Le Brun protested; but Helen silenced all their opposition by repeating her declaration, and in a way which convinced them both that she was altogether in earnest. They adjourned from the room, and held the following brief discussion:—

"We will send for Pauline," said the doctor. "You can assist her if you will."

"No, no!" was the firm, decided answer. "Pauline must not be sent for. I will be his nurse."

"You cannot watch with him all the night We must have Pauline," said the doctor.

"Pauline shall not touch him!" The flush had returned to her pale cheeks, and fire burned

in her eyes. "I would not leave him alone with her for a single instant! Let Pauline stay where she is. If it is the price of nursing you wish her to receive, I will pay her all the same as if she were in attendance. And now, Doctor," she said, speaking like one who had rights in the case—"I will receive any directions you have to give; and I promise you to observe them faithfully." In a lower voice, and for his ears alone, she added—"Save his life, Doctor, if within the power of human skill, and your reward will be great!"

It was now plain to the doctor in which direction his interests lay; and so, giving up all opposition, he accepted the services of the self-constituted nurse, who took immediate charge of the sick man—issuing her directions with the firmness of one in authority. To Madame Le Brun, she said—

"I wish Jeanette as my attendant. Charge what you will for her services, but let them be exclusively mine."

Madame Le Brun, surprised, and almost overawed, by the calm, dignified, resolute manner of her guest—so different from what it had been since the day of her arrival, as a feeble, drooping invalid—yielded, without a sign of opposition, every thing that was demanded.

When all this came to the ears of the English lady, in whose care Helen had been left by her

friends, during their brief absence in Italy, she attempted remonstrance. But the sentences she tried to utter died on her lips ere half spoken and she gazed in wonder upon the changed countenance and erect form of one who, when seen but an hour before, looked frail and drooping, like a weary pilgrim, whose steps were going hastily down into the Vale of Shadows. It was to her a marvel and a mystery.

When the dimness of twilight came, and evening drew her shadowy curtains closer and closer, Helen took her place by the side of the sick stranger, and never left him for a moment until the day dawned. Twice during the night he coughed slightly, each time with an effusion of blood, which was checked by medicine which had been left for the purpose—and which was given instantly. Helen shuddered, as she thought how entirely his life was in her hands, and remembered what Jeanette had said of the old nurse, Pauline.

When Jeanette came to relieve her in the morning, Helen manifested no signs of weariness or exhaustion; indeed, it required some persuasion to induce her to relinquish her post, and seek the refreshment of a few hours' sleep.

Not once during the night had the sick man evinced any distinct consciousness; not once had he opened his eyes, or spoken. Even during the

two fits of coughing, and the attendant flow of blood from his lungs, he only moaned feebly.

At ten o'clock, Helen awoke from profound slumber. The lady, in whose care her friends had left her, was sitting by her bedside, and as she attempted to rise, placed her hand upon her, and bore her gently, but firmly back, until her head rested on the pillow from which it had just been lifted.

"You have not had sufficient rest, Miss Hardy, after a night of watching. Lie still, and sleep again."

Helen looked at her for some moments, not fully comprehending the meaning of her words.

"Where is Jeanette?" she asked.

"She is with the sick man, who is sleeping."

This reply made all clear in an instant. Her heart struck a quicker measure, and the blood came warmly into her cheeks.

"How is he?" she asked, with an interest in her tones that could not be repressed.

"There is no change in him. He has scarcely moved, Jeanette says, since you left him."

"Has the doctor been here?"

"Not yet."

"He should have been here long ago." Helen looked disappointed, and her voice betrayed anxious feeling. "Hark!" she added, after a moment

or two, and partly raised herself to listen. "Isn't that the doctor's step?"

The sound of a man's feet was heard along the passage.

"Yes," she added, starting up, as the sound ceased, and the door of the adjoining room was heard to open. "And I must see him!"

Remonstrance was in vain. The lady might as well have talked to the wind. Helen arose. and throwing on a morning-wrapper, went hastily from her own chamber to that of the sick man. She found the doctor at the bedside, looking with a sober face upon his patient.

"How did he pass the night?" he inquired, in a low whisper.

Helen stated, in a few sentences, what had occurred.

The doctor shook his head.

"Did he lose much blood?

"No."

"You gave the medicine?"

"Yes."

"Right. And the bleeding ceased?"

"Almost instantly."

"He has had no nourishment?"

"None. What shall we give him, Doctor?"

"Fresh cream. I should have ordered it last night. Let a spoonful or two of fresh cream be given every hour."

Helen looked at Jeanette, who went noiselessly from the room. In a few minutes she returned with the cream. In the mean time, the doctor had felt the sick man's pulse, and pronounced its beat encouraging.

"He must be kept very, very quiet," was his injunction. "Much—everything, I may say—depends on that. I will leave more medicine, to be given if the hemorrhage returns. And don't fail to give a spoonful or two of cream as often, at least, as once in an hour. I will call in again before night."

After the doctor retired, an effort was made to get Helen back again into her own room; but it was a fruitless one.

"It is useless to urge me," she answered the distressed lady-friend, who feared the most serious consequences—"my duty is here, and here I must remain. Do not feel any anxiety on my account. God never assigns to any one a duty without giving strength for its performance. The life of this sick man He has placed in my hands, and I will be true to my trust—true, even if assured that my own life were at stake."

The lady gazed upon her with mingled fear, wonder, and admiration.

For several hours, Helen remained a watcher by the sick man's bed, never failing to give the nourishment ordered by the physician. When

the doctor came in the afternoon, he pronounced all the symptoms more favourable.

"If he recovers, Mademoiselle," he said to Helen, impressively, "he will owe his life to you." A little while afterwards he asked—

"Who is to sit up with him to-night?"

"That will be my task," answered Helen.

But the doctor said, "No; you are too feeble, Mademoiselle. You will get ill. You will die Jeanette must sit up."

Helen smiled courageously, as she replied—

"I will not leave him in the care of any one. I will watch through the night."

"But you were up all last night."

"I have been sleeping to-day, and I will rest again this afternoon."

She could not be turned from her purpose; and so all opposition was withdrawn. Late in the afternoon she was persuaded to lie down, when she obtained more than two hours' refreshing sleep. She then relieved Jeanette, and watched through all the silent night in the sick man's room.

CHAPTER XXV.

The Tourists' Return.

"And what is human sorrow?
The dew upon the earth,
That boweth down the flower awhile,
To call its odour forth."—Mrs. Howitt.

Not so still and death-like lay the sufferer now. He moaned frequently, was restless, and had several slight attacks of coughing, which alarmed Helen fearfully. But greatly to her encouragement and relief, no effusions of blood accompanied these paroxysms. During the latter part of the night, he became more composed, and even slept.

Patiently his angel-like watcher kept her post by his side, through all the weary hours. A little before day-dawn, the restlessness returned; and with the low moanings heretofore attendant on this condition, was the occasional utterance of words, and incoherent sentences. What a quick start Helen gave, as her own name fell from his lips! Leaning close down, she looked into his face. But the eyes were closed. Again the pale lips moved, and again her name was spoken. It

seemed as if a new life were born in her heart—a new life, with newer and sweeter emotions than had ever yet stirred the hidden depths of her feelings. Bending over the sleeper, she pressed her pure lips to his forehead. Was it the kiss of a sister?

Love and Duty, united, had given strength up to this hour. But, now, Duty went out from the sick chamber—Love only remained; but Love was even stronger in her blessed isolation than when her colder sister stood faithful at her side.

A new fear now took possession of Helen's mind. The life of the sick man hung only, as it were, by a single thread, which the slightest touch might sever. Up to this time he had neither seemed conscious of where he was, nor of who were in attendance upon him. In the gradual flowing back of the current of life, that consciousness must come, and she trembled for the result.

The question of leaving him now wholly in the care of Jeanette presented itself, was viewed on every side, and held long in earnest debate. But there was danger in either alternative. He was still too feeble to bear any withdrawal of the wisest attentions. There was the hourly danger of a recurring hemorrhage, in which case, were his attendant sleeping through oppressive weariness, he might suffocate

Daylight set in, with its cold gray aspect; the wasted lamp no longer threw a shadow upon the wall; but still the patient watcher was in her place, every faculty of her mind alive. She feared to move, lest a sound should disturb the sleeper, and awaken him to conscious life. Her eyes were upon his pale face, every well-remembered feature of which had the old manly outline, and the old manly beauty, even though wasted by disease. Tears came into her eyes, and she turned her face away in order to shut out the image for a moment, and recover that calmness which her position required. Back to the past her thoughts took a sudden leap, and she lost herself for many minutes among old remembrances. A movement in the bed recalled her to the present. She turned to her patient, and met his eyes, clear and intelligent, looking steadily upon her. An electric thrill passed through her frame.

"Helen! Helen!" His lips moved, and the name was uttered in a half whisper, and with the manner of one who feared that a sound might cause the vision to fade away into airy nothingness. Helen only raised a finger to her lips, and looked a caution to be still.

"Helen!" The name was repeated, and in a tone of deeper interest.

"Be calm, Edward,—very, very calm. Your life depends upon it," she said, bending towards

him, and speaking in a voice that betrayed nothing of the tumult in her breast.

A slight warmth came into his pale cheeks, and a brighter light into his eyes. Helen trembled, lest the quicker motions of his heart should send the blood with too vigorous an impulse into his lungs.

"You have been very ill, Edward," said Helen, speaking low and impressively, — "and there must be no excitement now. Close your eyes— repress all feeling. There is a friend by your side, who will not leave you in your weakness to the mercy of strangers."

"Where am I?" he whispered.

"In Marseilles." Helen placed a finger upon his lips, as she answered his question. She then added,—"Do not speak again, Edward. You are in Marseilles. In the train from Avignon, you were taken dangerously ill; and on its arrival here, you were brought to this hotel, where I was passing a few days. Thank God that you are recovering; but everything depends upon your freedom from excitement. Do not let all our care for you be in vain."

The sick man did not attempt to speak again, but fixed his eyes upon Helen's countenance, never withdrawing them for an instant; until her glance fell beneath the fascination of his gaze, and she turned her face partly away. When she

looked at him again, the lashes had fallen upon his pale cheeks, and there was a smile upon his lips. In a moment or two, he opened his eyes again, and they rested in such loving looks upon her face, that her heart began to burn within her, and the fluttering pulses to send the warm blood to mantle with new beauty a countenance which, to Edward Linton, shone already with more than angelic loveliness.

When Jeanette came in, half an hour afterwards, to relieve Miss Hardy, the sick man was in a quiet slumber.

"How is he?" she whispered.

"Better," was replied.

"Has he spoken?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?" asked the curious girl.

Helen evaded the question.

"I will take your place, now," said Jeanette, "you must be very weary."

"I will remain a little while longer," replied Helen. "Come back in an hour."

"Oh, no, no!" returned the kind-hearted girl. "You will make yourself ill. I have slept soundly all night; and I am young and strong."

"I had rather stay for the present, Jeanette," said Helen, firmly. "I wish to be here when he wakes again."

After further vain efforts to induce the watcher

to resign her place, Jeanette, at her request, retired from the room.

For nearly an hour Edward slept on—his breathing much firmer than before. He awoke with the name of Helen on his lips, and opened his eyes to see her face bending over him.

"It is no dream," he whispered, while a feeble smile played over his countenance.

"No, Edward," she answered back in a whis per, "it is no dream, but a living reality: You are better, thank God! but very weak. There must be no excitement—no exertion. Everything depends on perfect quiet of mind and body. Even thought must repose."

He made a motion to reply, but she laid a finger on his lips, saying—

"I enjoin the strictest silence."

A pleased smile went flitting lightly over his wan face; and his eyes looked up into hers, tenderly and gratefully, where he read more than she wished to reveal.

"Do not leave me," he said, when Jeanette came in, and urged her to take some rest.

The girl turned to him quickly, and ere Helen could prevent her from speaking, said with some warmth—

"She has already been up with you two whole nights. She will get ill and die. It is only a few days since she arrived here, so weak that she

could not walk alone. The watching will kill her. I am well and strong. I will stay with you, but she must go to her room, and sleep."

A shadow fell instantly upon the sick man's face.

"Go, Helen," he said, feebly. "Go! Don't think of me."

"You will find Jeanette very kind," whispered Helen, bending close to his ear. "She will call me, if I am needed. I will get a few hours' sleep, and then be with you again."

She laid her hand upon his forehead, and held it there with a gentle pressure for some moments. Then giving him one tender glance, she turned away, and retired to her own room, but not to sleep. Thought was too busy—feeling too active—for mental oblivion.

"There is a Providence in this strange meeting," she said, as she pondered the past and the present. "Is it not wonderful that we should meet, in this far-off region, and under such peculiar circumstances? If he should recover, has not God made me the instrument of preserving his life?"

It was time for Helen to look down deeply into her heart, and she felt that it was so. She needed no wise one to inform her that Edward still cherished the old affection. And she doubted not that life had gone on with him, since their

parting, in loneliness and isolation. The thought inspired a tenderness before unknown.

And how had life passed with *her?* Would *she* willingly live over again the years of their separation? Had the days, since she rejected, with an almost unwomanly firmness, the suit of Edward Linton, been days upon which she could look back with pleasing remembrance? No—no! Not for herself!—not for herself! She had been a kind sister, a loving aunt, a faithful friend, blessing others in her daily life, as she walked with unfaltering footsteps the path of duty. But the green things of her own heart were withering all the while—the pleasant garden becoming a desert—the flowers fading ere half unclosed—the fruit dropping from the sapless branches. Over what a waste of being did Helen look back, with almost tearful eyes; and as thought turned from the desolation of her own life to that of Edward Linton, and she remembered with what sad, hopeless eyes he had looked into her face, years before, when, from a false principle—originating in selfishness—she had said to him that she would never marry, the struggling affections of her nature broke the iron bands with which she had bound them, and with a freed impulse went springing to their goal.

Resistance, if she had felt inclined to resist, would have been vain. Former impressions were

fast passing away. The strength of old purposes was dying out, because in suffering they were exhausted. And now, this new life, which was seizing upon the decaying elements of the old false womanhood, and consuming them as stubble, was bringing to her spirit new hopes, new joys, new aspirations. It was like a second birth!

When Helen returned to the bedside of Edward Linton, she found the physician in attendance. He pronounced all the symptoms favourable; and said that his patient was much better than he had expected to find him. From this period, restoration progressed rapidly; and by the time the little party, which had passed on to Italy, came back to Marseilles, he was able to sit up, and even to walk unassisted about the room. Not more surprised were the members of this party to meet their old friend, than to see the remarkable change in Helen. They had left her wasted and feeble; but now her graceful form had gained its old erectness; the flush of a healthy heart-beat was in her countenance; the light of a new life in her eyes; and a smile of more than former beauty on lips long curved in sadness.

A week after the return of Helen's sister from Italy, a marriage was celebrated at the hotel; and the next day the American travellers, diminished in number by the loss of one member of

the party, started for the Rhone, and Lyons, on their way back to England and America.

It was a month later before Edward Linton, whose health steadily improved, and his wife—the happiest wife living, we had almost said—left the soft, pure sea-breezes of southern France, and went to their home in London.

There is a Providence—a Providence extending to the minutest particulars of our lives—from the hour of birth to the hour of death. It is expressed with remarkable precision in the Divinely-spoken words—"The very hairs of your head are all numbered." Most persons err in their estimates of the Divine procedure, and call those providences dark and mysterious which shadow the natural life, and disappoint the selfish affections. But these are the clouds which have "a silver lining." It is behind these frowning providences that God hides his "smiling face." All His dealings with us—all His permissions—have special regard to the elevation and purification of our spiritual natures, and in no case do they regard merely the pleasures of our natural lives. Until some degree of spiritual affection is born in us—some love of what is true and good for its own sake—we are not able to see this, and therefore we walk in darkness, and murmur against God, as did the old Hebrews in the wilderness.

Painful as were the experiences of Edward

Linton and his wife,—sad, and weary, and almost desolate as a portion of their lives had been,—each had an hereditary quality which needed for its purification just this severe discipline. He had grown wiser through the elevation of his understanding as to the higher truths of spiritual wisdom; and she had grown more loving through self-denial, patience, and a devotion of her life to the work of blessing others. The union was a truer one than it could have been in the earlier days of their companionship; for theirs was the union of soul, which springs from a mutual perception of those wise, and loving, and mutually-adapted qualities, which meet only once, and then conjoin for ever.

THE END.

T. S. Arthur's Popular Works.

These books are all gotten up in the best style of binding, and are worthy a place in every household. Copies of any of them will be sent, post paid, to any address on receipt of price by the publishers,

John E. Potter & Company,
617 Sansom Street,
PHILADELPHIA.

TEN NIGHTS IN A BAR ROOM, and What I Saw There. A truly touching series of powerfully-written Temperance sketches, which have proven a great auxiliary in the cause of reform, and have contributed largely to the author's great popularity. By T. S. Arthur. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 25.

ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN on their Duties and Conduct in Life. Intended to strengthen their good purposes, to elevate their minds, and to educate them into sounder views than are common to the masses of society. By T. S. Arthur. Cloth. $1 25.

ADVICE TO YOUNG LADIES on their Duties and Conduct in Life. Designed to inculcate right modes of thinking as the basis of all correct action, and to eradicate the false views of life which everywhere prevail. By T. S. Arthur. Cloth. $1 25.

THE OLD MAN'S BRIDE; or, The Lesson of the Day. Showing the fatal error committed by those who, in disregard of all the better qualities of our nature, make marriage a matter of bargain and sale. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

THE HAND WITHOUT THE HEART; or, The Life Trials of Jessie Loring. Exhibiting a noble and true woman, who, during the bitter years of an unhappy marriage, swerved not amid the most alluring temptations from honor and duty, and showing the final reward of her long trial of faith, love, and high religious principle. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

GOLDEN GRAINS FROM LIFE'S HARVEST-Field. Remarkably entertaining and lively pictures of actual life, which demonstrate the importance of good principles, pure affections, and human sympathies full of the soul's nutrition. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

THE GOOD TIME COMING. Exhibiting the dissatisfaction and yearnings of the human heart, and pointing out the golden sunlight which from the distance is continually shining down upon it for the purpose of warming and nourishing it. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE ALLEN HOUSE; or, Twenty Years Ago and Now. Portraying vividly the legitimate fruits consequent upon the pursuit of either of the two ways in life, the right and the wrong. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

WHAT CAN WOMAN DO? In which the great influence and power of woman, for good or for evil, is shown in a very interesting series of life pictures. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE WITHERED HEART. Affording a striking illustration of the necessity for avoiding the false and selfish principles which too often lead to a sad and total waste of being. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE ANGEL AND THE DEMON. A work of thrilling dramatic interest, which contains moral lessons of the highest importance to families and young mothers, and which stands forth pre-eminently among the author's many fine productions. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 25.

THE TRIALS AND CONFESSIONS OF A Housekeeper. Furnishing, from real life, many of the trials, perplexities, and incidents of housekeeping, embracing in its range of subjects such as are grave and instructive, as well as agreeable and amusing. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 25.

AFTER THE STORM. A new and fascinating volume in which the folly of too much reliance upon one's own opinions, and a disregard of the attentions due one another, is fearfully apparent, while the story is deeply interesting throughout, and the moral unexceptionable. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

THE WAY TO PROSPER, and Other Tales. Showing the power of virtue, harmony, and fraternal affection among members of a family in securing their future well-being and prosperity, and, wherein the want of these qualities conduces to misfortune and ruin. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

THE ANGEL OF THE HOUSEHOLD, and Other Tales. In which we learn how kind feelings and obedience to our better impulses benefit us, and how, with the little heavenly visitant, the tender babe, angelic influences enter the household. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

TRUE RICHES; or, Wealth Without Wings, and Other Tales. The lessons in this work show how ruin succeeds to unfairness, and success to honesty of purpose; setting forth truths that all should remember, and that no one can learn too early or too often. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Steel Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50

HEART HISTORIES, and Life Pictures. Giving painfully correct histories, such as too often cloud the hearts of people and may generally be seen in the dreary eyes, the sober faces, the subdued and mournful tones that almost daily cross our paths. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

HOME SCENES: Its Lights and Shadows as Pictured by Love and Selfishness. Directed toward keeping the light of love forever burning in our dwelling, and toward aiding us in overcoming those things which are evil and selfish, while each moral presented seems in itself a jewel worthy a place in memory's casket. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

SPARING TO SPEND; or, The Loftons and the Pinkertons. A book showing the beneficial results of a wise restriction of the wants to the means—a virtue which all should possess, and which in this extravagant age cannot be too forcibly illustrated. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

LIGHT ON SHADOWED PATHS. Stories which faithfully point to many of the different shadows that have crossed the paths of others, and which afford much of invaluable instruction, tending to rend the clouds that may hover o'er us, and to keep us within the sunshine of life. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

OUT IN THE WORLD. Unveiling the sad experiences that necessarily await jealous, proud, and sensitive young men, and undisciplined, wayward, and petulant young women; also, revealing the true and only way of escape. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

OUR NEIGHBORS IN THE CORNER House. A fascinating and stirring narrative, which adds its terrible evidence to the fact that sin will find people out, and that justice will triumph over injury—even under extraordinary circumstances. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

NOTHING BUT MONEY. Picturing, in the most forcible style, the difference between avaricious and ambitious men and those who prefer social happiness and peace; also, offering a striking lesson to the very many young minds in which gold outlustres every other consideration. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

WHAT CAME AFTERWARDS. A sequel to the preceding volume, yet a story complete in itself, in which we are shown how the precious gold in our natures, after we have encountered severe discipline, will reveal itself in our intercourse with the world. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

THE THREE ERAS IN A WOMAN'S LIFE; or, the Maiden, the Wife, and the Mother. A work depicting the happy effects of right training when brought in distinct contrast with the wrong, and showing also the fruits of right living. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

BEFORE AND AFTER MARRIAGE; or, Sweethearts and Wives, and Other Tales. Drawing choice pictures of lovers and husbands and wives, faithfully contrasting marriage and celibacy, and teaching the folly of employing money to the mere pampering of pride and indolence. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

THE MARTYR WIFE, and Other Tales. A remarkably interesting work, pointing out social follies, and including the excellent and popular stories of "The Heiress," and "The Ruined Gamester." By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

MARY ELLIS; or, The Runaway Match, and Other Tales. Attractive experiences that will readily commend themselves to the real life of many who have sought for but never found their ideal. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

THE YOUNG LADY AT HOME. Home stories most happily drawn by the author, involving the troubles, errors, and perplexities incident to domestic life, and showing woman's real mission. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

STEPS TOWARDS HEAVEN; or, Religion in Common Life. A volume, free from sectarian or denominational influences, which cannot but deeply impress the mind, and awaken in every one the highest type of human happiness. By T. S. ARTHUR. Cloth. $1 50.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF REAL LIFE. Containing a series of captivating and intensely interesting Temperance stories, which, perhaps, no other author can furnish with equal acceptance, and containing a moral suasion which cannot but affect for good all who read. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 75.

SKETCHES OF LIFE AND CHARACTER. Pleasantly written stories, drawn from everyday life, and free from all exaggerations, which invariably leave a powerful impression upon the mind of the reader. By T. S. ARTHUR. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 75.

LEAVES FROM THE BOOK OF HUMAN Life. A choice selection of stories, intended to leave the mind active with good purposes and kindly sympathies—the value of each one of which is clearly evident. By T. S. ARTHUR. Numerous Illustrations. Cloth. $1 75.

SWEET HOME; or, Friendship's Golden Altar. A companion for the evening hour; pure in morals, elevating in tone, cheerful, hopeful, and reverent in all its views of God, and a transcript of "Home, Sweet Home." By FRANCES E. PERCIVAL. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE ANGEL VISITOR; or, Voices of the Heart. Intended to bring light and joy to those who are heavy in heart, as well as to echo the gentle teachings of Jesus, and to comfort the sick and afflicted everywhere. By FRANCES E. PERCIVAL. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE MORNING STAR; or, Symbols of Christ. An excellent volume, designed to magnify the beauty and wisdom of the Word of God, and to cause the believer and unbeliever to think more of the Saviour. By WILLIAM M. THAYER, author of "Hints for the Household," "Pastor's Wedding Gift," etc. etc. Cloth. $1 25.

THE SPIRIT LAND. An instructive and very desirable work, which is submitted to the public with the counsel that we cling to the Word of God as the only infallible guide of faith and practice amid the fanaticisms of the day. By S. B. EMMONS. With Mezzotint Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

THE DESERTED FAMILY; or, The Wanderings of an Outcast. A forcibly and prettily written story, designed to soften the heart to just influences, to warm the affections to proper emotions, and to elevate and fructify the soul. By PAUL CREYTON. With Illustrations. Cloth. $1 25.

FASHIONABLE DISSIPATION. A stylish and brilliant narrative, which, together with *"Adela Lincoln: A Tale of the Wine Cup,"* included in the book, is high-toned and worthy popular favor. The former by METTA VICTORIA FULLER, the latter by M. F. JARRY. With Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 25.

LIVING AND LOVING. A collection of beautiful sketches which evince all the vigor, freshness, and attractiveness so peculiar to the authoress, and which are highly instructive. By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. With fine Steel Portrait. Cloth. $1 25.

WHILE IT WAS MORNING. One of the authoress's sweetest stories, in which we are taught that sorrow, pain, and disappointment must come to all in the world; yet the grand truth stands out in glorious significance—"The righteous shall not lose their reward." By VIRGINIA F. TOWNSEND. Cloth. $1 25.

ANNA CLAYTON; or, The Mother's Trial. A tale of real life, written with beauty and force; and in its plot and execution of the very highest moral excellence and useful tendency. By Mrs. H. J. MOORE. Cloth. $1 25.

THE CHRISTIAN'S GIFT. Embodying some of the most select religious articles from the finest minds, among which are "The Refuge from the Storm," "The Sabbath and Heaven," "Heaven Conceivable to the Christian," etc. etc. By Rev. RUFUS W. CLARK, author of "Heaven and its Emblems," etc. etc. Cloth. $1 25.

WOMAN'S MISSION AND WOMAN'S INfluence. A wonderful work, of which Bishop Doane has said, "It is the very book which, if I had a thousand daughters, I would put into their hands, with the Bible and Book of Common Prayer, as their best companion, &c." Tenth American, from the Seventeenth London Edition. Cloth. $1 25.

THE ENCHANTED BEAUTY, and Other Tales, Essays, and Sketches. Embracing many of the finest, most elaborate, and finished articles of the well-known author. By Dr. WILLIAM ELDER, author of "The Life of Dr. Kane," etc. etc. Cloth. $1 25.

THE RAINBOW AROUND THE TOMB; or, Rays of Hope for those who Mourn. A carefully arranged and attractive book of selections, both of prose and poetry, containing much of wisdom in several departments, and forming a valuable and desirable gift for the Christian parent, child, or friend. By EMILY THORNWELL, author of "The Ladies' Guide to Perfect Gentility," "Young Ladies' Own Book," etc. etc. Cloth. $1 50.

HEAVEN AND ITS SCRIPTURAL EMblems. A series of articles on the splendors and joys of glorified saints and their secret communion with the Father in the Holy of Holies. By Rev. RUFUS W. CLARK, author of "The Christian's Gift," "Lectures to Young Men," etc. etc. With Steel Illustration. Cloth. $1 75.

THE YOUNG LADIES' OWN BOOK. An offering of love and sympathy, dedicated to the maidens of her native land, and containing admirable selections, in prose and verse, which will universally be regarded as superior in quality and authorship to most similar works. By EMILY THORNWELL, author of "The Rainbow around the Tomb," etc. etc. Cloth. $1 75.

SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW; or, The Poetry of Home. A sprightly and well-written work, in which we are led through scenes and incidents descriptive of rural life in America; designed for the entertainment of young men and ladies. By HARRY PENCILLER. Cloth. $1 75.

THE ORPHAN BOY; or, Lights and Shadows of Humble Life. This touching story of humble life illustrates the magnetism of love over the human soul, and in the perusal of it the heart of the reader will often be drawn out in sympathy with the hero of the tale. By JEREMY LOUD. Cloth. $1 75.

THE FORGER'S DAUGHTER; or, Out of the Shadow into the Sun. A book for pleasurable and profitable pastime, which will interest and arouse the sympathies of every intelligent reader. By MARTHA RUSSELL. Cloth. $1 75.

OUR PARISH; or, Pen Paintings of Village Life. A delightful story of rural life, in which the principal characters are among those earnest and sincere souls that gather every sabbath in simple country churches. By GEORGE CANNING HILL, Esq. With Steel Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 75.

OUR FOLKS AT HOME; or, Life at the Old Manor House. The object in this work is to impress upon the young the importance of having an object in life, and that object a really useful one. By EDWARD TOLIVER. Handsomely illustrated by engravings from original designs. Cloth. $1 50.

HANS THE STRANGER, and Other Stories. In which the author keeps in view utility in its higher sense, and endeavors to show to the young that the true purpose of life is not amusement or enjoyment, but usefulness. By EDWARD TOLIVER. Handsomely illustrated by engravings from original designs. Cloth. $1 50.

THE WREATH OF GEMS. A neat unique gift book for the young of both sexes, in which are selections from the best English and American literature—groupings which will be, doubtless, both new and highly acceptable. By EMILY PERCIVAL. Steel Frontispiece. Cloth. $1 50.

THE EARLY MORN. A small volume addressed to the young on the importance of religion, which will be found admirably adapted to such intelligent and educated young persons as have been unmindful of the demands of religion. By JOHN FOSTER, author of "Essays on Decision of Character." Cloth. 25 cents.

A full descriptive Catalogue of these and all our publications, including a great variety of Bibles, Testaments, and Albums, and embracing many of the choicest Biographical, Historical, Practical, and Miscellaneous Books in the country, will be sent to any address on application. Address,

JOHN E. POTTER & CO., Publishers,
617 Sansom St., Philadelphia.

This book is DUE on the last
date stamped below.

RECD LD-URL
OCT 12 1973

OCT 15 1973

10M-11-50(2555)470 REMINGTON RAND - 20

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 001 372 743 3